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“THERE'S ROSEMARY”

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The Author, wearing the first toilet made by John Worth in the style which succeeded "wasp waists." This toilet so delighted Queen Alexandra that she asked the author to be photographed in it and give the picture to her. (See Chapter XXXVIII.)

D.D. DICKSON

“THERE'S ROSEMARY”

By

H.H. PRINCESS MONTESQUIOU
MONTLUC SIENA

With 21 Illustrations

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DEDICATED

TO THOSE

WHO LOVE THE PAST

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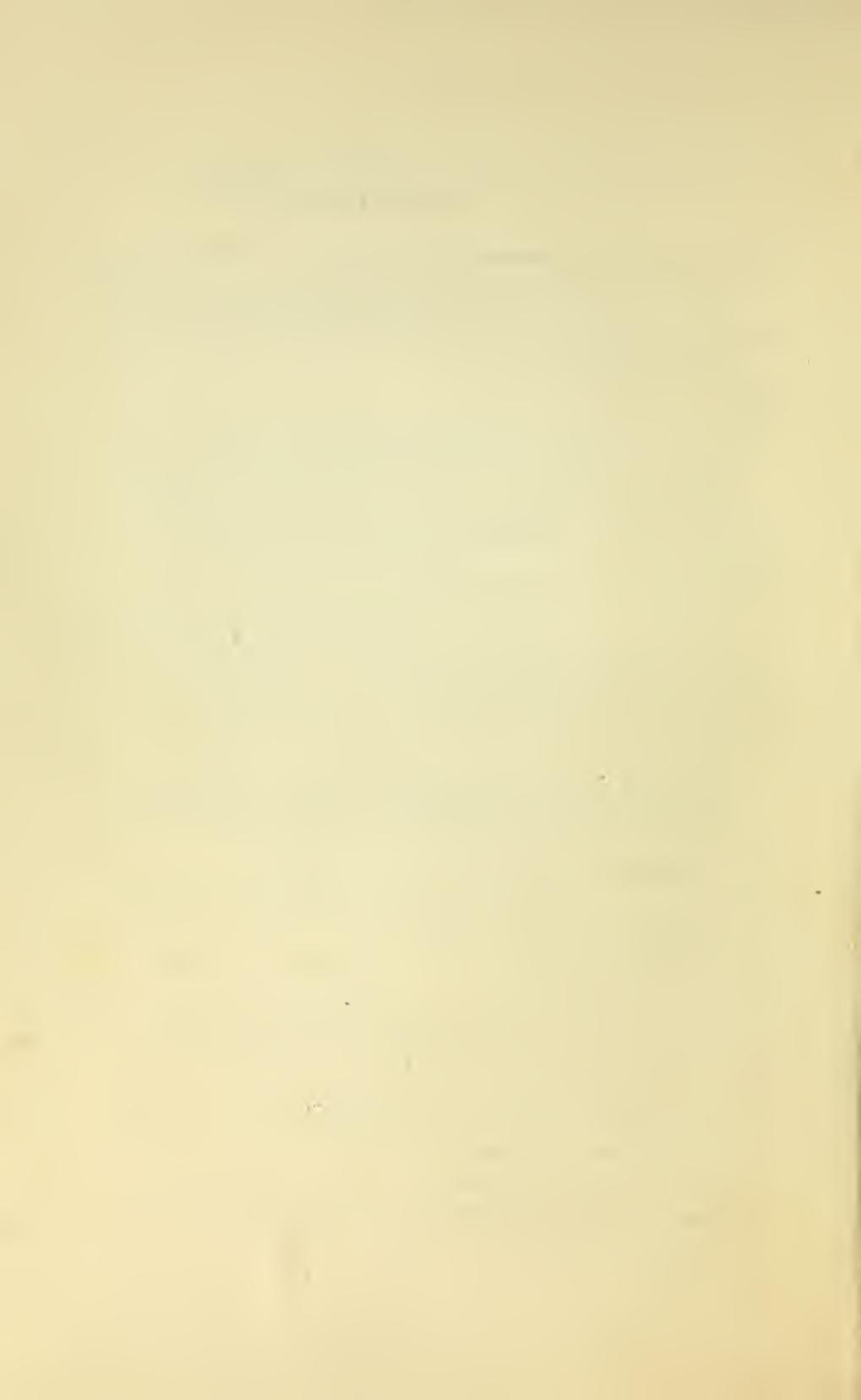
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“ THERE'S ROSEMARY ”

CHAPTER I

1865-67

Early memories. Persecutions after the American Civil War.
Bad niggers—and good. One for the Judge.

“ There's rosemary ; that's for remembrance.”

SHAKESPEARE, master of emotions as he was, knew that memories like rosemary are bitter-sweet. Looking back—back across the years as far as those troubled times which followed the American Civil War—I see a path strewn with rosemary ; a path trodden by Kings and Queens, Princes and Princesses, tragic beauties and happy ones, men whose lightest word has since shaken the wide confines of the world. The children with whom I played at soldiers and who attended dolls' tea-parties with me have grown up, ascended their thrones, and played soldiers, some of them, in deadly earnest ; the Great War has passed over us all, sundering the friendships of nursery days, teaching that Kings may often have to follow tragic ways not of their own choosing.

In this book I shall try to tell something of the life in the gorgeous Courts of pre-war days ; of the intrigues and adventures that befell us at Fredensborg, at Sandringham, at Vienna and in Knickerbocker New York ; of affairs grave and gay whose like you post-war people will never see again. We were butterflies, some of us, in that golden age before the world grew sad and solemn ; but give us credit at least for being brave butterflies, and for adapting

ourselves now that the summer has gone, without complaint, some to the task of bringing peace and security out of the chaos of post-war troubles, and others like myself to the loneliness and contrast of enforced retirement. We do not complain.

I am directly descended from the warrior Clovis, who was baptised in 487 by St. Remo at Rheims. His descendant and my ancestor was dethroned by Charles Martel, and the family, after many wars, finally settled at Montluc, which title we have since held. Adrian Montesquiou Montluc, Prince de Chaboriais, came to Italy with Francov I in 1554, and defended the City of Siena against the Germans so bravely that he won the proud title of the Christian Warrior, and was hailed as such throughout Europe. Henry de Montesquiou was asked by Le Roi Soleil, Louis XIV, to lead a band of gentleman-adventurers to found in the King's name a great new Empire overseas, in newly-discovered America. In return for his services he was presented with wide lands in Louisiana, named after King Louis ; and on those lands, in a later day when my family had become directly connected with the Royal House of France, this story of mine begins.

Louisiana was sold by Napoleon for four million dollars to President Jefferson in 1814. There is a saying—"a nation cannot be sold." Louisiana was peopled by ancient and noble French families, and these families did not see fit, because of the financial transactions of a little Corsican usurper, to change their allegiance from France to any other nation. And that—not any question about slaves—caused the American Civil War. Buonaparte was at the bottom of it, not Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Washington feared the independence of the powerful Southern landowners. No cruelty to slaves existed, save perhaps in parts of South Carolina. In Louisiana, slaves were devoted to their owners ; most of them sought to follow the latter into exile, rather than be "freed." Of the contempt of some of them for "freedom" I shall tell later on.

Just before the troubles which caused the outbreak of the Civil War, my father was in Mexico with the unhappy

Emperor Maximilian, who was a friend of his youth and his comrade in arms. Maximilian, as will be remembered, was the second son of the Archduke Francis Charles of Austria, and in 1859 he was begged by Mexico to become her Emperor. Only after four years of political pressure and repeated requests from Mexico did he consent to accept the crown, and then, like most Princes who try to help a foreign people, he was brutally murdered by those who begged him to rule them, being tried before a trumpery court-martial and deliberately shot before his wife's eyes in 1867, in which year, when I was still a very tiny girl, this story begins. His tragic Empress, Princess Charlotte of Belgium, lost her reason at the sight, and always believed to the day of her death that her husband was alive and well. My father, unlike certain other famous supporters of the Emperor, did not desert him in his extremity.

After the Civil War, when the Northern troops and their gutter-nigger allies had proved victorious, we began to hear dreadful tales of the atrocities committed to intimidate peaceful families of Southern civilians. At that time, my grandmother, the widow of Stuart de Vere, English Ambassador to the United States, was living with my mother in Louisiana, and both were confident that no outrage could be considered against the family of a friendly envoy. They were wrong.

One glorious morning, Union troops rode up to our villa, and came tramping through the rooms, rudely knocking aside our old negro servitors who tried to bar their way. With studied insolence of phrase they announced that they had come to free our servants, and ordered us to “get out” of the villa at once, as it was commandeered ! We were refused time to pack our valuables for obvious reasons ; we were told, if we valued our lives, to go while they were still safe, and never to return.

No one attended to me ; I was frightened and tearful, and I vividly remember the shocked faces of our faithful niggers as they tried to oppose the invaders. They were roughly ordered to remember that they were free men and to be silent ! Clinging to protective skirts, I left for ever the

home of our ancestors while nigger troopers seized in vandalous hands our dainty treasures and heirlooms from old France.

Then came a new trouble. Our coachman and footmen were niggers too, and there were no white men at all at the villa at the time. And the Captain would not permit niggers to act as servants any longer to the hated Southerners. Our old black coachman would have attacked his “ saviours ” single-handed had we not restrained him. He stood growling and bristling like a dog on a leash. But he could not save us from further indignity. We were forced to climb into empty munition waggons, driven down to the station in discomfort and abuse, and packed into a third-class wagon for Washington. Meanwhile, our poor “ freed ” servants were made to stand by while our beloved villa was burned before their eyes. To save them from the indignity of sleeping for one more night in the house of slavery, they were driven forth to sleep as best they could under the cotton bushes, clad only in the few rags they were wearing —for they too were able to save nothing from the house.

My family was now without money, for all the bank-notes they had were drawn on Southern banks, and from the day war was declared, these became valueless. I have myself seen big iron-bound boxes packed full of Southern notes amongst other old rubbish in the garrets of houses we later occupied.

I wonder what History would have said of the war if the South had won ? For the stories in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are pure invention, made up to justify sectarian hatred. It is a pity that the Victor always writes the history of any struggle. During my grandfather's and father's time, only one slave was sold from our total of five hundred or so. This single instance was a very fine young nigger who was my grandfather's chief coachman. A ladies' maid, a coloured girl, fell violently in love with him, and begged her mistress to buy him so that they might be married. The nigger was bought and the marriage celebrated, but it proved so unhappy that after a while the wife begged just

as hard that he might be sold again. He was sold ; that was the only case of buying and selling in our part of Louisiana.

All our own personal attendants begged on their knees, and despite the jeers and threats of the Union soldiers who had come to release them, to be allowed to follow the family to Washington. As many as we could accommodate were allowed to do so ; with the rest we parted very sadly. At the Capitol, our accommodation was scant, but the maids preferred to sleep on the mats outside their mistresses' doors, rather than leave us. The Northerners in the hotel used to bring coffee and bread-and-butter to those slaves when the family could get nothing, and tried to condole with them about the “tyranny” which made them sleep so uncomfortably, but they got very little encouragement.

During this time, an old nigger was told to give evidence against his former master's son. “Now you,” hectored the Judge, “just tell the truth and don't fear no Master now. You're just as good as I am—as good as General Grant—as good as the President himself—as good as Master Harry.” The nigger frowned heavily at his questioner. “Well, Judge,” he said severely, “ah may be jus' as good as you an' General Grant an' the President, but—as Massa Harry ! Never !”

When the old nigger nurse of my father was asked by a public official : “Are you the servant maid of that lady in Number so-and-so ?” she answered indignantly : “I isn't no servant. I belongs to the Princesse !”

The devotion of these old slaves to their masters never changed ; they refused to grasp that new conditions had come into existence, for those new conditions, as they saw them, struck at their warm-hearted and unquestioning loyalty. The North freed the slaves, but it never treated them as well as they were treated before the war. The slaves of my childhood days knew their place and desired to observe the duties of it ; they gave loyalty and devotion and received respect and affection. This is the candid truth.

CHAPTER II

1867-74

At the Danish Court. A lady of old France. Princess Alexandra and Prince Charming. Hide-and-seek with the future King of England.

SHORTLY after this, we left America and paid a visit to the Swedish Court of Queen Louisa, Consort of Charles XV Bernadotte. I was too small then to notice much besides the bustle and pomp of it, but I vividly remember our next visit, to the Court of Denmark, where Grandmother wished to pay homage to Queen Louise, mother of the beloved and admired Princess Alexandra, afterwards Queen of England.

When I speak of my grandmother in these memoirs, it is invariably of my maternal grandmother, widow of Stuart de Vere, for my father's mother, Princesse Orleans de la Graviere, died shortly after her husband, who only lived to be twenty-nine. Everybody thought it very odd to have a grandfather who died at that age. My father was his only child. Grandmother stopped in Copenhagen partly to call on her aunt, the Marquise O'Neill de Bonnage. This grand old lady was at that time ninety-three, being the widow of the Grand Marechal of the Court of Louis XVIII. During the September massacres, when France was in the grip of revolution and bloodshed, the Marquise effected a dramatic escape from the howling Paris mob when the shadow of the guillotine already threatened her, and fled to Denmark where Grandfather was then attached to the British Embassy.

She was a real grande dame of old France and never gave up the Court customs of pre-Revolution days. She

insisted on holding her receptions in the mornings, and on making them as like the old Levées as possible. She bowed to convention so far that she did not actually receive in bed, and dress in the presence of all her friends ; I fancy she shrewdly surmised that such an exhibition of humiliated bone would be less than attractive. But she expected and insisted that visitors should present themselves at ten o'clock in the morning.

We were related to the old lady through my mother's mother, who was an O'Neill of Shane on the maternal side, and Scotch on the sword side. But, although we were relatives, we had to attend the morning reception in formal state, or the Marquise would have been mortally offended.

We entered the Marquise's antechamber at ten o'clock precisely, and were ushered by a lackey into the spacious drawing-room where the old lady presided. She sat stiffly in the centre of a semicircle of white-brocaded gilt arm-chairs, and the room was decorated with great mirrors and gilt ornaments after the fashion of the old regime. Around the Marquise ranged a number of old ladies, all very prim and wizened and correct—a shrunken little Court, but not a whit abating the grand manner.

According to the rank of the lady who entered and whose name was announced in a loud voice by the major-domo as she appeared, the Marquise would advance one, two or three steps to meet her ; and great was the jealousy among those who attended if they felt that unfair recognition was given to anyone. Entering, for me, was rather an ordeal, for I had been instructed exactly how to drop a deep curtsey and kiss the Marquise's hand, and I knew well that the old lady's sharp eyes, trained in King Louis's Court, would note even the tiniest imperfection in my obeisance. However, I succeeded quite well.

After our entrance, the circle of old ladies settled formally again into their big arm-chairs, and the conversation went on in subdued voices around the topics of the day and what little interesting news from the different courts each had accumulated. There was a good deal of talk about the English Prince of Wales and his sweet young Danish bride,

the Princess Alexandra, and everyone there seemed very happy at the union of such a pair, for Royal lovers may not always marry the person of their choice, as had happened in this case. As I was of course too small to take part in the conversation, I was disposed of on a low footstool, and a maid brought me a beautiful doll to play with.

I was in the midst of admiring it when suddenly the great folding-doors to the outer drawing-room were flung wide open, and the major-domo announced in a stentorian voice : “ Son Altesse Royale la Princesse de Galle ! ” Through the doors, with that slow, infinitely graceful movement of a Princess who has been taught how to carry herself, stepped Princess Alexandra.

There was a great bustle of starched petticoats and reduced crinolines, and all the ancient dames curtsied to the ground, while Madame la Marquise herself went all the way to the door of the first drawing-room to drop a curtsey so deep that I watched, fascinated, wondering if she could ever get up again to her full height. The Princess courtesied in the old-fashioned way, for she was always a punctilious observer of proper customs ; and her sweet, sunny smile seemed to light up all the ancient furniture, and each of the old dames felt that it was directed particularly towards herself, and idolised the young Royal visitor for it.

She asked at once : “ Who is the little golden-haired girl ? ” and so I was called forth and solemnly presented. I was five years old then, and it was my first Royal presentation, though I was too shy to do more than answer the questions the Princess put to me. Some evenings later, my elder sister and I were allowed to stay up late to stand at the window of our great-grand-aunt's, the Marquise, to watch the Royal carriages driving past into the brilliantly illuminated portal of the Palace of the Russian Ambassador, Baron Mohrenheim, right opposite. A great soirée dansante was being held in honour of the Russian Royal family and the Prince and Princess of Wales.

It was a magnificent, starlit, frosty night, of a clearness which does not occur except in the northern countries, and thousands of spectators filled the big square below us,



Queen Louise and King Christian IX of Denmark, parents of Queen Alexandra.

cheering and jubilating every time a Royal carriage arrived. To us small girls, pressing our noses against the panes, getting a splendid view of each big carriage with its gorgeous coachman and footmen and noble horses, the riot of light and noise and excitement was delicious. Now, Denmark is socialistic, and the Royal family excite little friendship and less enthusiasm among the people. How fickle nations are—in those days, I truly believe, anyone there would have flung himself under the horses' hoofs if necessary to serve the King.

Everyone then was talking of Prince Edward of Wales and his beautiful Danish wife. Ever popular as he was, I doubt if he ever in his life received more general homage than on this Danish visit. He was still young, romantic, handsome, witty, and he was known everywhere among the people as the Prince Charming.

Some time later, Grandmother took a villa a quarter of a mile out of Copenhagen, and not far from the Castle of Princess Alexandra and her sister the Empress Maria of Russia. During that summer, we went a great deal to Fredensborg, the summer residence of the Royal Danish family. Motor cars did not exist in those days, so we covered the distance, which was not great, in Grandmother's coach, with four wonderful horses and a coachman who prided himself on his speed. Ahead of us galloped our outriders, cracking their big whips and clearing our way of all other carriages, waggons and riders that the lordly coach might pass—such was the fashion of those days.

At Fredensborg, my sister and I played hide-and-seek with Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of Prince Edward of Wales, and with his little brother George, now King of England, and also with other Royal children there. The Duke of Clarence and my elder sister Isabel divided the supremacy of our childish games, and Prince George and I were always allotted the minor parts. If Isabel and the boy Duke disagreed, he almost always had to give way, for she was a very strong-willed girl, and accustomed to having her own way even when with children a good deal older than herself. Sometimes, we played at soldiers

to please the boys, and then we had magnificent toy cannons outside in the grounds, and Isabel's army always won the battle.

In those early days, we received tuition in the Danish language, which Queen Alexandra always spoke from the first days when he began to talk, to her first-born and the darling of her heart, the young Duke of Clarence. I, as a little child, had picked up a good deal, and found the lessons easy, but not so Prince George, who used to knit his brows solemnly over the first rules and words, and even fear audibly that his playtime might be abbreviated because of it !

It was a delightful summer, and the Fredensborg gardens were a fairyland for us children to wander in and play. We did not always agree in our play, however, as I shall tell in my next chapter, when Prince George gallantly ridded us of what we had almost begun to consider a bogey !

CHAPTER III

1874

King George and the ugly doll. Nursing the King of Denmark. The Duchess whose cloak was "tacked." How the Paris Bon Marché started. Some stories of Hans Andersen. The modest French governess.

MY sister Isabel was always a strange child, strongly opposed to everything we others wanted, and a rebel against authority in the matter of the Danish lessons, in which she practically refused to take part, and to which she would not pay attention. She had intense likes and dislikes, too, and one day she saw a doll which our nurse had brought home from a country fair, and decided that she must have it. It was quite the ugliest doll I have ever seen—a crude, wooden, painted thing, badly dressed, more fit for a rough peasant child than for a princess. But just when everyone else protested against its hideous appearance, she clasped it to her, fondling it and saying it was a beauty. She made exquisite clothes for it, but even then its rude origin was still apparent.

From that moment, however, Judy presided over all our lovely Paris dolls. They had to take second place while this rough little country thing was placed at the head of the tiny table on which we held our dolls' tea parties with the beautiful doll's tea services with which we played at Fredensborg Palace. "I won't play at all if Judy can't be Queen," she used to say; and as games without Isabel were very dull indeed, we had to consent.

In order to get the young English princes to play with our dolls, which they thought rather girlish, we had to bribe them with lumps of toffee, chocolates or ginger-bread,

and many a keen bargain was driven by little Prince George, leaving us girls ruined of all our stores of sweet-meats. He was always very kindly, however, and used to give us most generous shares back again for promising not to tell about his part in the games.

On one occasion, all our offers of confections were disregarded. “ But,” said the Prince, “ I will play with you on one condition. Let me be the doctor, and the dolls can be ill. I'll cure them.”

Suspecting nothing, Isabel and I agreed. The doctor, with a pencil for a thermometer, found that all the patients were progressing favourably—except one. Over the sad case of Judy, he shook a grave head. “ High fever,” he said solemnly. “ I fear she will never recover ; you must prepare for the worst ! ”

Isabel looked askance at that, but she had agreed to calling in medical advice, and would not shrink from her bargain. A few minutes later, the “ doctor ” made another visit. After a prolonged examination, he rose and removed his hat, which he had put on for the purpose. “ Quite dead, I fear,” he said sadly—or was there a tinge of half-frightened pleasure in the voice ? “ We must bury her at once.”

We all looked fearfully at Isabel. Her lip quivered for a second, but her pride upheld her. “ Quite right,” she said in an uneven voice. “ I'm to be her parent and chief mourner ! ”

“ I'm to be sexton,” claimed the doctor hurriedly. “ Then I shall be priest ! ” chimed in the Duke of Clarence. As for me, I had a splendid idea. “ I'm going to be bell-ringer—I'll borrow the big bell from the servants' dining-room,” I said eagerly. I thought the doctor-sexton would want to change again, but he let me have it. And then after all we found that we were not to be allowed to go out, because it was raining ! Isabel's face brightened with hope, but she was not to escape her loss so easily. “ We can carry out the burial to-morrow—it will be more proper than having it so quickly after the death,” said Prince George decisively. And so it was.

We spent the rest of the afternoon laying out Judy in state, and all visiting her to pay our last homage to her corpse. Next day was fine, so we tolled the great bell, and then—all wearing waterproofs as a sign of deep mourning—filed out behind the corpse, which the boys carried, to the very deep and workmanlike grave our “ sexton ” had dug. Judy was decently interred, amidst real tears from Isabel, and the earth stamped well down on top of her. The rest of us were jubilant at having got rid of the bogey-doll, but our triumph was short-lived. Isabel sought out the page-boy who carried coal up to the schoolroom and paid him all her saved-up money to go and dig up the corpse !

My sister felt it would be unfair just to go and open the grave herself ; she compromised by sacrificing her savings as an offering to her sense of honour. But—once the body-snatching was effected—Judy, more ugly and paintless than ever, presided over our parties with a much more autocratic authority than before, and often our lovely dolls were sent early to bed for misbehaving at table under this wooden martinet’s eye ! But Judy was not to rule for ever. Thwarted once in his effort to rid us all of a tyrant, Prince George next discovered that Judy was a witch. There was then, of course, nothing for it but to burn her at the stake, and Isabel was too proud to plead for her forgiveness, though she wept bitterly that night for her lost companion.

During intervals of our play, Grandmother often used to tell us stories. One which always pleased us was of her first visit to Denmark in the very first steamer that ever crossed that stormy waste of waters which we know as the North Sea, and which had formerly been crossed so often by the long-ships of the Vikings and of Canute of Denmark and England. That first steamer was the *Hebe*, owned by Confretnsrad von Lundt, President of the Scandinavian Society in London. He founded the Cryolit in Greenland, and his nephew, James von Lundt, was our first teacher in Danish, and became our teacher again a few years later, when my cousin, Marie of Orleans, joined our class, studying the Danish language prior to her marriage to Prince

Waldemar of Denmark, Queen Alexandra's youngest brother.

One day when we were playing in the grounds of Fredensborg Palace, pretending to be bands of robbers in hiding among the lofty trees, the Royal nurse came along bearing in her arms a tiny white bundle, and accompanied by one of the ladies of the Crown Princess' suite. They stopped for a moment to watch our play, and each one of us in turn was permitted as a great treat to hold in our arms for a minute or two that little white bundle—now the six-foot King Christian X of Denmark.

Some time ago, I had occasion to remind His Majesty of the incident. He laughed. “ If the Princess should hold me in her arms now, she would need a couple of my tallest Guardsmen to help her,” he said. “ It would be easier for me to do so,” I replied, “ than for your Majesty to bend so far down as to be able to give the Royal Brother kiss to the little Italian King on the occasion of the late Royal visit to Denmark.” The King smiled again. He has always been possessed of a keen sense of humour. When he was Crown Prince, he and some gentlemen of his suite called on Madame de Falbes, widow of the Danish Ambassador in London, and so irregular was their appearance that the entourage refused them admittance, since when telling the story against himself has always greatly amused the King.

Another of our favourite stories concerned the Duchess of Argyll, a bosom friend and distant connection of Grandmother's through her Scottish forefathers. This lady, when on a visit, chanced to admire very greatly a cloak Grandmother was wearing, and asked if she might have it copied by her French maid, who was very clever with her needle. This was agreed, and one afternoon the cloak was brought up for final comparison, but only tacked up still in case it needed final minor adjustments in cut and fit. It was, however, adjudged perfect.

Some time later, at a great gathering of the Scottish clans, Grandmother met the Duchess again, and was horrified to see that she was wearing the cloak still only

tacked together. She asked why it had never been finished. “ Weel,” said the Duchess slowly, “ I thought it might lose its freshness by passing through hands again for sewing. And now I’ve worn it sae long as it is, I’ll e’en wear it out. It will do just as weel, nae doot.” And she kept her word, and subsequently appeared at all sorts of important gatherings in her tacked cloak.

A story which specially fascinated us girls was of the days when Grandmother lived at the English Embassy in Paris, in the Rue St. Honore. Not far away was a tiny shop where a young man, son of the owner, sold ribbons, embroidery, silks, and similar little articles used in ladies’ embroidery. For in those days it was considered quite as fashionable to display white hands engaged on delicate needlework as it now is to show brawny and sunburned paws capable of the hardest tennis or golf.

The young man showed such skill in finding ribbons and cottons to match or suit, that Grandmother said to him one day : “ You should certainly start a really smart shop of your own ; you have such perfect taste.”

“ I have the skill, Excellency,” he replied sadly, “ but alas ! I could not finance such a venture.”

“ That might perhaps be arranged,” said Grandmother quietly. Later, she spoke to two friends, Madame de Rambouiet and la Marquise de la Rochefoucauld, and the three ladies put together a sum of 10,000 francs, which was offered to the young man free of interest. That young man was Aristide Boucicant, and with the money he started the Magasin de Modes, now world-famous as the Bon Marché de Paris.

Many years later, when Boucicant was quite an elderly man and Grandmother—then a very old lady—was visiting the shop, which had grown to a vast establishment with hundreds of employees, we were told that he had insisted that he was always to be called personally to wait upon her Excellency whenever she honoured the shop with her presence. And in his will later, he stated that purchases were always to be sent with no obligation to return them for approval by the descendants of those three ladies, and

that materials were to be supplied to them at nominal prices.

When Grandmother returned shortly afterwards to the Swedish Court again, she noticed a great difference from the gaiety and excitement of life in Denmark. Grandmother was a great friend of the old Queen, but the latter, a Dutch Princess of the house of Nassau, withdrew herself more and more into an atmosphere of puritan penance, while the King lived among rowdy companions, and surrounded himself with ladies of more than doubtful virtue.

At this time, we children were left in Denmark under the care of McAllister, Grandmother's right-hand maid, a discreet old Scotswoman who had been with her since they were both little more than children. With her was Mademoiselle de l'Edailler, our French governess. This lady was a model of old-fashioned propriety, and gave us considerable secret amusement. When we walked out and the boys were with us, we had to wear a rubber string about our skirts, so that the wind should not be able sportively to display our ankles ! I don't think dear Mademoiselle de l'Edailler could possibly have survived the shock of seeing the short-skirted girls of to-day—she would have died, and considered it only proper to die ! When we approached any slight incline, the boys were always bidden to go on ahead lest they should see *her* ankles !

At this time, we were much invited to call on the upper Danish families to partake of a national morning refreshment—ten o'clock chocolate and oranges. During these visits, we often met the famous children's story-teller, Hans Christian Andersen. I well remember my first meeting with this strange man. We had been visiting child friends in Copenhagen, when suddenly our hostess entered, followed by a thin, rather wild-looking gentleman with big, kindly eyes. Perhaps I looked shy, for he stretched out his arms to me at once. “ Come here, little girl,” he said, and once he smiled I knew I should like him very much indeed. I went over to him, and he sat down and lifted me on to his knee.

“ There was once a little golden-haired princess, just like you, and I'm going to tell you a story about her,” he began,

as all the other children clustered round us. And he started telling us the story of the Princess and the Pea, while we listened, enthralled.

When he had finished, our hostess turned to him. “ You should include that in one of your beautiful volumes of Fairy Tales,” she said.

“ But—do you think it would be good enough—I only just made it up as I went along,” he replied. And that was the origin of that famous story, made up specially for me. We often met Mr. Andersen afterwards, and he often used to take me on his knee and tell me fairy stories, but of them all I always preferred the one about the sleepy Princess.

CHAPTER IV

1874-75

Back to the Mississippi. The Prince and the octoroon. An exciting tea-party. Helping escaped prisoners from Sing-Sing. The criminal who made good.

AT about this time, business affairs of importance called Grandmother back to the United States, and we accompanied her there. The Mississippi had flooded and swamped what little was left of our property on its banks ; and, what was worse still, our old lawyer, Vincent Hall, had neglected to make a gift of this land to the Northern States, as all the other big landowners had done, and now enormous amounts were owing to the Government in various forms of taxes. These included not only the direct taxes on our land, but our share of the costs of local work done to keep the river from overflowing (much use that had been !) and now part of the expenses of repairing the broken dams. The amount we had to pay, despite Grandmother's efforts to retrieve the situation, amounted to over one hundred thousand dollars : and then, so formidable did the future prospects appear, she made over all the lands to the United States as the cheapest way to be rid of them.

At that time, the South was not a healthy place for us old families, so Grandmother arranged with one of her closest Northern friends, Mrs. Stuyvesant, to take her house at New York and her villa on the Hudson at Poughkeepsie, where we could reside for a time, till things were more settled.

During that summer, our little family was augmented by two new members, whose story is a tragic one. The estate next ours in Louisiana belonged to an ancient family, the

Maison de Marigny, and the present owner was a young and charming gentleman, whose hereditary title was the Marquis de Rambouillet, Prince de Pomchartiare, Prince Orleans de la Graviere—and a string of minor dukedoms. This young man fell violently in love with a lovely young girl whom he afterwards discovered was an octoroon, though her complexion was as white as that of any French beauty.

She resolutely refused all his advances till at last he offered to marry her. The ceremony was performed by a coloured priest on the Marigny property at his command, and the pair lived for a year or two in perfect happiness. Meanwhile, however, they had absolutely lost caste with both the white and the coloured population. White people would not receive him and his wife; while among the niggers, despite his princely titles, he was always addressed as “Ole Man Marigny,” and in a contemptuous tone.

Tiring eventually of universal scorn, “Ole Man Marigny,” on the advice of his brother, sent away the coloured girl and her baby boy to Washington, while he himself went on a prolonged visit to France. While visiting relations there, he met and became enamoured of a beautiful French girl, a distant cousin, whom he married and brought back to Louisiana as his wife. The octoroon girl was paid a regular pension, and lived comfortably enough in New York, while the Marquis and his charming young wife speedily recaptured his lost position in society, and had two children, a boy and a girl.

When, after the Civil War, all sorts of claims were being made by those who had the ear of the Northern victors, the coloured girl made a public claim against the Marquis to be acknowledged as his only rightful wife, and seeking to establish her son's claim as his heir. The Marquis himself had just died, and the judges decided that his first marriage was valid, the octoroon's son heir to all his possessions, and the beautiful young French widow was pronounced an open paramour and her children declared illegitimate.

These decisions so affected the unhappy lady that she lost her reason, and was sent to a madhouse in France, where her own family could order her care. The two

children meanwhile were received into the house of my grand-aunt, the Princess Alice d'Orleans de la Graviere, and when she died—which was while we were staying at the Stuyvesant house—Grandmother, with her never-failing kindness, offered to take care of them. Pierre was sent to a college, while Mary remained with us.

The Stuyvesant villa at Poughkeepsie was an old Colonial mansion built by the famous Stuyvesant Governor of New Amsterdam, who contended that the town on Manhattan Island should retain its old name, while the English Government insisted on calling it New York. The house was a beautiful one, and commanded wonderful views over the Hudson and the wooded hills beyond.

We children were allowed perfect liberty to roam in the gardens and woods ; Mademoiselle and a couple of nurses set out with us as a rule, but they sat down comfortably and left us to our own devices. One day, we were told that some prisoners had escaped from the nearby State prison of Sing-Sing, and we were warned not to leave the park for our favourite haunts in the adjoining wood. For some days, we were accompanied by a footman, near whom we had to play, but this precaution was relaxed after a week or so, as it was believed that the prisoners had escaped from that part of the country. We were still, however, supposed to keep inside the park boundaries.

In the middle of the river was a lovely little island, with shady trees and a little summer-house where we always longed to have a secret luncheon. A boat was moored temptingly opposite it on our bank, but of course while the Sing-Sing prisoners were still at large, the island was forbidden ground to us, which naturally greatly increased its attractions ! One glorious summer day, we decided that we could wait no longer. Grandmother was lunching in her own apartment with her ladies, so we arranged with a favourite young footman who carried the coal up to the nursery fire that a specially sumptuous lunch should be secretly prepared ; and with it we set out in great glee.

Our new friend, Mary de Marigny, and I rowed the boat

—rather uncertainly, I fear—while Isabel sat on cushions in the stern, basking in the sunshine and dragging her hand lazily in the water. I took my guitar, and, ensconced on the island, we told stories and sang old French songs, and even Isabel was in high spirits. Our only attendant was a young kitchenmaid, sister to the young footman who had arranged our lunch. She waited on us at our meal, and afterward seated herself on the grass and joined in our choruses.

Just after we had finished a song, we heard a rustling in the grass near us, the branches of some bushes just in front suddenly parted, and the head and shoulders of a very good-looking young man appeared, dressed—or rather, undressed—in some sort of cotton undergarment which looked like a bathing suit.

In those days, there was not such liberty in bathing garments as there now is, and we were somewhat shocked and not a little frightened. But the young man gracefully and profusely excused himself, saying that he and his companion were in difficulties. They had, it appeared, been out in a boat and landed on the island, not knowing that it was private property. They had then undressed and gone for a swim ; meanwhile their boat, in which were their clothes, had become unloosed from its moorings and floated away down-river, taking all their possessions with it. Since then—this had happened the previous day—they had starved, and now they had plucked up all their courage to appear so lightly clad before the young ladies, and to beg the charity of their assistance. A second young man, similarly clad, now stepped from the bushes ; he was far less presentable in appearance and speech than his friend, and had he been ambassador, I do not know that we should have been so pleasantly impressed with him, or so ready to help.

As it was, we three girls accepted the situation with great hilarity, the two youths were accommodated with our waterproofs, dust-cloaks and shawls, and invited to share with us in what was left of our luncheon, which they ate ravenously. We were still too young to have settled down

entirely to the conventions of the polite world, and instead of being shocked, we enjoyed our Robinson Crusoe adventure quite as much as the two Fridays we had so opportunely rescued !

The conversation flowed with delightful ease, the first-comer speaking charmingly on all sorts of subjects—literature, adventures, fairy tales of knights in distress who were saved by powerful young princesses, poetry, which he quoted aptly and sonorously, and he treated us as grown-up ladies with a courtesy and deference which made us all feel that we had never spent so lovely an afternoon. After such a meeting, princesses could not possibly leave knights helpless and starving on an island, so we offered them a place in our boat, and they rowed us over, keeping all the time out of sight of the house.

Then Rachel, our maid, was sent up to the villa to commandeer whatever should be discovered in the wardrobes of our absent brothers. While she was away, Isabel, always our most practical member, talked over the financial question. The boys' wallets had of course been carried away in the boat ; we could not permit them to leave us quite penniless. Between us, we managed to raise the noble sum of three dollars fifty cents—Rachel being the richest and contributing a new two-dollar bill, at which she looked a little regretfully as she parted from it. It was very difficult persuading our friends to accept the money, but Isabel, with her Royal assurance, insisted, and that settled the matter.

The last we saw of them was two figures, rather strangely clad in garments of varying fit and size, black against the sunset and trudging slowly over the horizon. Rachel was, of course, warned to say nothing about our adventure, and as we parted from her outside the house, she put a finger to her lips with intensely conspiratorial air and said : “ Mum's the Word ! ”

A short while afterwards, we were startled to see in the papers that two of the escaped prisoners from Sing-Sing had been caught, naked and starving, in the woods near the Hudson, and had been quite glad to get back to prison

again. But, reading on, we discovered that two others—a bank clerk who had made a slip and a young craftsman—had miraculously disappeared, though their prison garments had been discovered. I am sorry to say that none of us in the least regretted having diverted the stern course of justice.

“ I'd do the same thing again ! ” declared Isabel passionately. “ They weren't wicked any more than we are ! ” And, years later, she did do the same thing again. She founded a society of young ladies who met at the East Ferry prisoners coming back from the Blackwood Islands after their first sentence. As the men descended from the boats, sullen, branded and workless, these ladies spoke to them, helped them with money or employment, and gave them a chance to make good without letting the world know about the prison brand on them. The Society was run under the auspices of a young and ardent Presbyterian minister ; it still exists.

Many years after our island adventure, when we had been twice to Europe and were staying again in New York at the old Stuyvesant mansion, my maid came running excitedly up to me, saying that a very handsome young gentleman had asked an audience of the young Princess. My maid having told him this was impossible, as he was quite unknown to us, he had delivered her a parcel, which she now handed to me.

I opened the parcel myself. It covered a book containing a most tasteful selection of famous speeches of the world's best-known actors, together with a splendid portrait of each. It was exquisitely bound in limp calfskin, and addressed—“ To my Guardian Angels, who helped me in . . .”—and there followed the date and year of our island rencontre. I made a point of discovering who the donor was, and it proved to be an honoured and prosperous partner in one of New York's greatest banks—and our charming guest at the island picnic. Despite the first slip for which he had been imprisoned, he had since made good.

CHAPTER V

1875

We attend a Mormon meeting. Return in a wheelbarrow. The lost shawl of Queen Victoria. Lola Montes—Dean's daughter and King's mistress. The sequel to a society elopement.

ALITTLE while after our adventure with the convicts, we heard that there was to be a great Mormon meeting in Poughkeepsie, and determined to attend it. Terrible consequences would have accompanied our decision if Grandmother had heard of it, but to have to overcome difficulties only pleased us. On the day of the meeting, she decided to dine in her own rooms, so, after having been summoned to pay our respects at six o'clock, after tea, we were free of supervision for the rest of the evening.

Rachel and her brother, our faithful young footman, were informed of our plans, and tried hard to dissuade us, but without effect. It was October then, and in the dusk shortly after six, we crept down the backstairs and met Rachel and John there. We dared not go into the hall and take our outdoor garments lest they were missed during the evening, so we got hold of anything we could from upstairs before leaving. Isabel picked up a wonderful old Indian shawl which Grandmother used in the garden. It was one of the famous shawls which Queen Victoria gave to her most intimate friends.

John and Rachel bore what refreshments were considered necessary; they had managed to pack a small basket with cakes and a bottle of stolen sherry. We got away from home unnoticed, and set out for the farm where the meeting was to be held, only to discover that it was a good deal further away than we had expected, and that our thin

evening shoes were very uncomfortable to walk in over the rough roads. However, by dint of stopping half-way for refreshments (we had to drink the sherry from the palms of our hands, as glasses had not been provided), we made good progress, and reached the farm-house just after the meeting had begun.

The spacious old-world kitchen was crammed with people, all of whom seemed very excited. The preachers screamed at the top of their voices, making powerful emotional appeals to us all to join them and be saved. They sang and prayed and went on like maniacs, and several of the younger members of the audience were visibly affected. Then, quite suddenly, a middle-aged man near the platform took offence at something that was said, shouted an epithet and leaped at the speaker. A fight started, and everyone began to join in. All the candles were put out or knocked over, and a terrible confusion ensued of blows, thuds, curses, screams and shouts, above all which rose the voice of one of the Mormons singing some sort of battle hymn.

We girls were terrified of the noise and darkness, but fortunately we stood just beside a window, which faithful John promptly broke open and pushed us out. Our one thought was to escape from the farm-house, but no sooner was that done than Isabel said she had lost one of her shoes ! The noise behind was growing more furious every moment ; there was no chance of finding the shoe, so we pushed on as best we could towards home, tired and scared out of our wits at this unseemly end to our adventure.

Isabel's thinly-stockinged foot hurt over the rough road, and soon she said she could limp no further. It was a time for desperate remedies, and so she climbed pick-a-back on to John ; but she was very heavy and he was uncomfortable, and soon she asked tearfully to be let down. “Leave me by the roadside to die—you can go on. I only want to die ! ” she repeated sobbing. We were passing a small farm, so John went to try to knock up the people to get some sort of vehicle. A head appeared from an upper window, immediately followed by a long rifle. “Get away, you thieves ! ” roared the exasperated farmer. “I know

you—you're those vagabonds who broke into Cogan's Farm last week. I'll count three, and if you're not gone, I'll fire ; by heck, I'll fire ! ”

We all backed rapidly away, for the man meant what he said. We were miserably starting to trudge along the road again when a policeman, attracted by the shouts and screams and knockings, came running up, hoping to be just in time to prevent some brutal murder. When he found out who we were, he used his authority to rouse the grumbling farmer, who finally and in a very ill temper lent us his wheelbarrow. That was all we could get, so that policeman was regaled with the unusual sight of a shoeless young princess sitting weeping in a dirty wheelbarrow, pushed by a scared footman, while her sister and cousin and their young maid limped along in the rear of the strange procession !

We got to the back gate of the villa at last in very repentant mood, and managed to steal indoors and creep to our rooms with thankful hearts. But our troubles were not ended. The rare shawl which Grandmother so dearly prized had been dropped by Isabel in the flight ; and it would be wanted first thing in the morning for Grandmother's garden promenade before breakfast !

Rachel and John had retired to the servants' quarters ; the only thing to do was to wake my youngest brother, who was visiting us with a college friend, and leave it to their generosity to search for the shawl. The boys had been jealously kept in the dark about our expedition, but now showed a most unbrotherly eagerness to help. They climbed out of the nursery window, down some thick creepers on to the glass roof of the hothouse, and down a pipe on to the grass. While they were away, we tied all our skipping-ropes together to aid their return, and after what seemed to us to be whole years they appeared again and climbed up to us safely.

They bore some dishevelled rags, and explained with long faces that they had found them in the adjoining meadow where the cow pastured that gave us milk and cream for the house. Isabel had evidently dropped the

shawl as we crossed that meadow, and the cow had chewed it to rags.

None of the three of us slept that night, and when, next morning, we waited as usual in the morning-room to drop our formal curtsey and kiss hands, we felt like condemned people awaiting their doom. We could not think of any excuse or mitigation, either for our escapade or for taking the lovely shawl. We heard Grandmother's steps on the balcony, her voice low in conversation, and the tinkling bells of her little King Charles spaniel. We did not even dare to look up as the door opened. Then the cheerful and kindly voice we loved bade us “ Good morning ! ” and there was Grandmother, smiling to us, with on her shoulders the shawl—still undamaged ! We were too relieved even to try to get equal with the boys for their cruel way of punishing us for not taking them with us to the Mormon meeting !

We spent that winter at the Stuyvesant Palace in New York. On the corner opposite us was a flower-shop owned by two brothers, the Buchanans, who held a great deal of land at New Jersey where they grew their stock. Their housekeeper was their widowed sister, a Mrs. Richmond ; all were Scotch, and therefore great friends of McAllister, our housekeeper. At that time, they were doing all they could to befriend a sister Scot in distress—Jean Gilbert, daughter of a revered Scottish Dean. This girl had rebelled against the Puritan rigour of her home life, and when, at sixteen, she was discovered taking lessons secretly from a dancing master, she was sternly bidden to renounce such affairs of the Devil or leave home for ever. She chose to leave home, and was disowned by her parents. Becoming a dancing girl, and assuming the name of Lola Montes—for she was possessed of a striking and passionate beauty—she attracted the attention in Munich of Ludwig I of Bavaria, who was a notable admirer of female attractions. She became his mistress, enjoying a life of luxury and power, and making herself cordially hated by the Royal family. When the King died, she was promptly exiled with a very modest pension, which soon ceased when Ludwig II increased his father's many debts.

The favourite whose power was feared throughout Europe was then glad to seek aid in New York from her compatriots, who, with typical Scottish clannishness, would not let her starve, although, as devout Free Church people, they strongly disapproved of her past. She died and was buried by the Buchanans in Old Trinity churchyard, where her big headstone probably still stands.

Another unhappy compatriot aided by the Buchanans and McAllister had an even more remarkable story. There was a great shooting party at a famous Scottish castle, and the young hostess fell violently in love with one of the guests, a graceful young Irish scapegrace, heir to a Ducal title. They eloped together, causing a great scandal among society people, but the story fortunately went no further, papers not being so vigilant then as they now are. The young couple fled to New York, where they spent some time in blissful love-making and in getting through the money which the girl had brought with her.

Meanwhile, although the man was received everywhere in New York society and had all the beauties of Murray Hill at his feet, poor Lady Jean was cut dead. The inevitable result was that, comparing his paramour's fading charms and worried, jealous face with those of the belles of Manhattan society, James Edward decided on a change, and one day took his ticket for England again, and left Lady Jean to discover his absence as best she might.

Friendless, penniless, thinking of suicide, she was at once befriended by the stern McAllister. “ She maun hae done wrang, maybe, but the Guid Book says we maun no' judge ! ” was that kindly lady's comment. Given fresh hope, the once haughty Lady Jean managed to get a job as assistant to a man who broke in horses for ladies' riding, and did quite well earning her own living till her employer's business failed.

Then, helped by her humble friends, she started a working-man's lodging house, doing all the work herself and even doing the catering. Once, when McAllister had called to assist and encourage her, a rough-looking young man with a jug of beer in one hand flung open the door of her little

sitting-room, strode in, and offering his pot with rough good-nature, said : “ Come on—wet your whistle, Duchess ; we know you can't afford much in the way of *aqua vitæ* nowadays ! ” Later, when we were driving down Fourth Avenue just before leaving for Europe, we passed Lady Jean, dressed in a faded and torn chintz wrapper, and carrying a foaming pitcher of beer in one hand, scudding along towards her lodging-house with the beer spilling over her dress in her haste.

As long as her husband lived, he stubbornly refused to aid her in any way ; but when he died, her son arranged a very pretty apartment in Paris for her, and all her early friends and many of her new acquaintances flocked to her dainty teas. These teas became a feature of Paris life, and all the wits and lions of the day attended them. Lady Jean regained all her lost charm and vivacity, and often used to sing to her distinguished company, which frequently included the English Ambassador in Paris, the songs of old Scotland which she had sung with a breaking heart and wet eyes to McAllister and us girls in the time of her poverty and disgrace in New York.

CHAPTER VI

1875-76

Kings and millionaires at the Stuyvesant Palace. Crowds on the social ladder. The stolen body. Great Chief Sitting Bull. After his war-dance. An Irish beauty disappears.

THE Stuyvesant Palace at this time became one of the notable social magnets of New York. Lord Dufferin and his wife stayed with us for some weeks on his way to Canada ; the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg visited us ; King Calicau lunched with us, and the present King of Sweden, then Crown Prince, dined with us and was, I remember, most impressed with my mastery of the Swedish language.

Cyrus W. Field, then recently knighted by Queen Victoria, was present on this last occasion, and ventured to ask the Crown Prince to dine with him, but in those days titled society was a guarded sanctuary, and the request was declined. The Vanderbilts were then just commencing to work their way into the better society circles, but had no real success until the daughter married the Duke of Marlborough. They were not Vanderbilts originally, but descended from a German family whose founder made a great deal of money running a ferry from Staten Island to New York. He bought the Palace on Staten Island known as Vanderbilt Harbour, and, as the original Vanderbilt family was extinct, he was allowed by act of Congress to assume the name himself.

Another man known to us who accumulated great wealth at about this time was old Peter Goelet, descendant of a Dutch colonial family, whose tiled farmhouse stood in the middle of what is now the more exclusive side of Broadway,

and dated from the time when that most famous street was a mere track ending in wild country where Washington Square now lies. As Broadway grew, the low two-story farmhouse sturdily stood its ground, surrounded by a rough, ill-cultivated garden where a bony cow and a couple of active sheep won hardy nourishment. A rickety wooden fence separated this old-timer from stately marble-fronted buildings, one of them the majestic A. T. Stuart store.

Such an eyesore did the old place become that the City Council offered Peter Goelet vast and increasing sums for the land, but the old man—grandfather to the present Duchess of Roxburgh—would not sell. To force his hand and to hide the farmhouse, the Council had a high wall built right across the front of the rickety fence. Peter immediately sued the City for damaging his property, and with the persistence of his race carried the case to Congress. He won in the end, and the wall had to come down. At this time, it was a standing joke in New York that the unchanging old man still drank his coffee from a handleless tin bowl as he had always done, and refused to change any of his former customs one whit because he had since become rich.

When he died the disputed bit of land was sold at last for 1800 dollars per square foot, and the immense sum realised eventually went to swell the dowry of the Duchess of Roxburghe. Later the Quaker Dairy was erected on the site of the farmhouse, it was said, in memory of the old cow and sheep—the last of their race to graze in New York City.

The A. T. Stuart building next Goelet's farm acquired a story all its own, and a strange and macabre one. Although the most wealthy retailer in New York, Stuart could not win his way into society, which then distinguished sharply between wholesalers and their retail brethren. He died without realising his wish, leaving his immense fortune to his wife, as he was childless. The widow had the body placed temporarily in a small church which belonged to the Stuyvesant family, meaning later to remove it to a sumptuous cathedral she was having built to his memory at New Jersey.

One day, a tremendous commotion arose in the City—the millionaire's body had been stolen! It was never

found, though huge sums were offered for its recovery by Stuart's widow and a rich young man who gossip said was his natural son. It became a slang saying in New York if a man was seen to be spending beyond his income—" He must have found Stuart's body ! " ; or if one was in a hurry—" You're off to find Stuart's body, I suppose ? " What was the motive of the grisly robbery, no one ever knew.

Grandmother at this time was considering leaving for Europe, where we were to go to school, but first she wished to see California, so we started for the Great West. Passing through Chicago, we were unable to get proper hotel accommodation because the city was then in the throes of rebuilding after the Great Fire. We stayed for a week or two at San Francisco, where the people looked at us askance, as relics from an older world ; and made our return journey via Salt Lake City, which disappointed us girls because it looked like any other city, whereas we, from our small experience of Mormons, had expected all sorts of amazing things.

On our road back, we were delayed by tremendous snow-storms, and during one of these stops we met the last of the great Indian Chiefs, Sitting Bull. He was on his way to Washington, attended by a dozen other tribal chiefs, to lay complaints before the "Great White Father," President Grant, concerning infringements of the Indian rights. At the same time was beleaguered a travelling Lyric company, headed by a young Irish beauty who called herself Fidelea Smith, but who was commonly said to be the runaway daughter of an Irish earl. She was known to her friends as Fiddlededee, and was already famous throughout the States for her wit and her splendid voice.

Grandmother at this time had her meals served apart in her own rooms with her ladies, and we children were thus able to hob-nob with the diamonded Yankee ladies and the strolling Lyric company to our hearts' content. Even Mademoiselle did not object, for she had discovered that one of the company was French and had worked at the Theatre Français—and was consequently "une artiste renommée" whom it could be nothing but proper to know. One evening,



Miss Yeo's size little Queen from
Alexandra

Princess Alexandra of Wales. This photograph was given to the author after her presentation at five years old to the Princess in Denmark.

the hotel keeper arranged an entertainment at which some of the Lyric ladies were to sing and Sitting Bull had been persuaded to promise to perform the war-dance of his tribe. You may be sure the audience was increased by three excited girls that night !

Sitting Bull had been treated to a great deal of fire-water, and after a few mild concert numbers had been given, the old man suddenly leapt to his feet—he had come in full war-paint and decorated with a wild head-dress of eagle's feathers—and gave a war-whoop which curdled our blood and made Mademoiselle almost sink to the floor. He whirled his tomahawk with such skill and vigour that no one dared move for fear of intercepting its glittering edge as it whistled about us ; old man though he was, he glided and danced to and fro till the fear of death was on us all. Finally, with a last awful scream and a final teetotum whirl, he collapsed absolutely breathless into a chair, leaving us all gasping with admiration at a truly wonderful spectacle.

We were to be treated to an even more astonishing sequel. While his last whoop was still echoing, Fidelea Smith was on her feet, had seized the tomahawk from his exhausted grip, and, uttering a war-whoop which equalled even her tutor's, was whirling and gyrating, gliding and stalking through the movements of the war-dance—giving an imitation so perfect that she might have been an Indian squaw or warrior herself. Not a word was spoken ; Indian warriors and white people were held silent by the marvel of her dancing. Faster and faster she swung her weapon, till the rouge and black of her make-up dropped in rivulets of sweat on to her pale blue satin corsage—on and on, till, giving the final horrible war-cry, she collapsed almost fainting into her chair. And all the time Sitting Bull stared at her as if she were some Indian goddess come to earth.

The concert broke up in tremendous excitement, and the Lyric party left the same night for Burlington. When they arrived, Fiddlededee was missing ! It was feared that she had gone out for a breath of air into the corridor of the train and perhaps fallen on to the line. But no trace of her body was found ; and moreover her property-box, which was

the very light of her eyes and which she often said she valued more than her life, was missing too. Was her body perhaps dragged away and eaten by starving wolves ? Or was she kidnapped by Sitting Bull and carried back to his wigwam, for her marvellous performance of the war-dance ? The mystery was never solved.

My youngest brother, who was ten years old at the time, composed a somewhat irreverent piece of poetry on the inspiration of the event. His English must have been quite good !

Come here and list to a mournful ditty,
A tragedy direfully funeral-palled ;
It is of a lady, Fidelea Smithy.
Usually, Fiddlededee she was called.

She took the express as she came from a party
Where Cupid and Bacchus at service had been.
She went outside to inhale a hearty
Breath of fresh air, and no more was seen.

Now you who are in arithmetic witty
Just tell me the weight of whisky and love ;
For these have o'erbalanced Fidelea Smithy—
Her trunk has been lost ; has her soul gone above ?

We left the next day, passing through Harrisburgh and Philadelphia to New York, and immediately began to prepare to cross the Atlantic again. For Grandmother had completed arrangements for us girls to enter a French convent school, in which we promised ourselves all sorts of exciting adventures.

CHAPTER VII

1876-77

Back to Paris. Prince Edward of Wales and the "Supernat'ral 'Bition." The author goes to a convent. Rule-breaking ambitions. Secret dances and feasts. Zola in the cells. Holidays at Sandringham with the Princes.

CROSSING the Atlantic in those days when many liners were still assisted by sail was in itself an adventure. But luckily for me, I have always been an excellent sailor; rough weather only exhilarated me. And the prospect of meeting other girls at the convent, making new friends of my own age and experiencing a new kind of discipline, was exciting, too.

At the Hôtel Mirabeau in Paris, Grandmother took the first floor for herself and her suite. At that time, Isabel appropriated almost entirely the services of the maid who had been allotted to us, so Patience, our old nigger nurse, was left to look after Mary de Marigny and me. Patience was a great character, and excited much attention wherever we went. She was outspoken, autocratic and delightfully warm-hearted, and of course that was a time when coloured servants were not very often seen in Europe.

One glorious morning, as we were walking along the Bois de Boulogne, a gentleman who was passing on the other side of the way crossed over to us, attracted by the enormous bulk and singular appearance of the old nigger woman in her correct black silk, white apron and bright-coloured hairband, and walking with a tall, slight, golden-haired girl. It was Prince Edward of Wales, later King Edward VII.

I recognised him at once as the father of my playfellow, Prince George of England; I had never seen him at close

quarters before, but current prints made me perfectly acquainted with that kindly, bearded face and those humorous, twinkling blue eyes. I curtsied correctly, explained who I was, and said that I had the honour to know the Princess of Wales, and how I had been presented to her. He was very interested, and with the Royal tact which so marked him he said a few kindly words to Patience, whose absolutely correct deportment and massive dignity of bearing obviously impressed him.

Except for asking me solemnly if that was really the Prince of Wales, Patience was solemn and round-eyed for the rest of our walk. She had never seen before a Prince who would in time become a reigning King. When we got home, she begged to be dismissed as quickly as possible, and seemed simply quivering with impatience. Later, I heard at second-hand her description of the morning's adventure.

“ When first I saw him, I thought he was not much of anything, and was ‘ dignan ’ that he dare speak to us. But soon as I knew he was a King—well, anyways, goin' to be one—I 'sure you with every word he spoke, he seemed to git taller an' taller, an' at las' I feel I should ought to get down on my knees before him ; and Her Excellency tolle me after that was just the way a real King would make you feel ! ”

Afterwards, she never tired of telling how, while in Paris, she was allowed to go to the Supernat’ral 'Bition—the International Exhibition—and of the marvels she saw there ! Also, she related with great dignity a story of how, in the servants' dining-room at the hotel, a certain woman had tried to persuade the others not to sit at table with her because she was coloured. “ An' that woman,” she used to add solemnly, “ was only one shade lighter'n me ! An' 'deed, I who knows 'bout niggers, knew at once that she ought to be just as black as I was, an' I tolle her so. Then a fine gentleman put an end to a mos' 'ndignified squabble—he was belonging to a real Prince an' waited on him. He said, if that there black lady is not to sit at table with those who 'tends so much and is not half so good as she, then I will sit apart at a table with her. An' after that,” concluded Patience triumphantly, “ I was considered more than any of the ladies who sat at the

high end of the table, right to the side of that gentleman who took my part.”

At last came our entry into the Convent of the Sacred Heart. We were both rather shy of it, and were very glad that Grandmother arranged to stay near us till we were well installed, after which she was to keep invitations at the Danish and Swedish Courts and stay with her friend, Queen Sophia, and then to return to Enerum, the lovely villa she had taken on a long lease, and where we were to spend our vacations. We learned before entry that the convent rules were very strict and the discipline very rigid, and so indeed they proved. But as soon as we had made friends with the other girls, we found ways of breaking the rules, and I fear that we enjoyed our secret insubordinations more even than we had enjoyed the privileges of freedom we had formerly delighted in at home.

Life in the convent was a perpetual mimic warfare between pupils and teachers. The books we were supposed to read when we could take a rest from our lessons were selected by the Sisters who arranged the library, and very dull and moral we found them! But we soon learned from the elder girls how to get hold of quite another sort of literature, such as we had never even heard of in Grandmother's house, under the tutelage of Padre Ignatius, the boys' preceptor, or Mademoiselle! There we had read and enjoyed all Walter Scott's novels, Fenimore Cooper and Captain Marryat, and had made plays of them to amuse ourselves; but here in the convent we began to read Paul de Kock, Dumas, Balzac and Eugene Sui, and our English classics soon were voted too dull and uninteresting to compete with the new friends!

A regular traffic of introducing prohibited literature was organised by the secret help of the Ursuline Sisters who did the menial services in the convent, while the Ladies of the Sacred Heart only taught and prayed. These Ursulines did what shopping the pupils needed, and of course had to give an account to the lady in charge, who inspected all the purchases before they were received by us. But nothing was suspected of a quite big leather bag which the messenger

carried under her voluminous skirts, attached to the waist by a string ; and in that bag was carried all sorts of contraband. In that way we obtained candles to light the cells when our tiny regulation supply of oil was exhausted, forbidden books and letters which we did not wish the lady in charge to read ! Our own small cheques were cashed in payment for these services and for the contraband goods' cost.

At eight o'clock all lights were supposed to be extinguished, and a Sister went round the cells to see that this had been done. As soon as she had passed, we drew from their hiding-places our smuggled candles, stuck them in the necks of our water-bottles, and gathered, four in each cell, sitting with feet tucked up on the narrow beds, reading aloud from our banned books or discussing details for a feast or dance. We were safe until midnight, when the next official round was made. But to make assurance doubly sure, we always posted girls by turns as sentries at the corners of the corridors, to give warning of any official invasion.

When the first Sister came round, accompanied by two of the Ursulines, we were all apparently asleep and gently dreaming in our beds. Five minutes later, with our guards posted, and dozens of candles shedding flickering light through the dark cells, we were in the midst of a secret party. The girls who had to represent cavaliers wore their knickers and blouses, with paper decorations of all possible designs and orders ; the “ ladies ” contrived trains by pinning outdoor mantles to the bottom of their dresses, or by tying sheets or bedcovers round the waist. Dancing then proceeded with great animation, while the more gifted performers whistled an accompaniment, the sound being deadened by the thick walls.

If a suspicious Sister was seen by our sentries in the distance, a painful, prolonged cough gave us warning ; and in the twinkling of an eye, candles, dancers, trains and orders were hidden and the searcher saw only innocently sleeping girls within closed doors, or modestly frightened ones wakened from their first sleep by a strange sound ! On one occasion, a paper insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece

was accidentally dropped in the corridor in our hurried flight, and a formal inquest was held upon it next day. But nothing was ever discovered of our night amusements, nor even suspected.

Both Mary and I and also another girl, whom I shall later often mention (for she became my best friend) hated arithmetic, algebra and all mathematics, and during lessons supposed to be devoted to those sciences we used to make cartoons on our slates of the lady who was teaching us. When we had to take up our labours for marking, we borrowed the slate of a neighbour more industrious than ourselves, and usually carried off the bluff without any trouble. We also passed notes from one to the other by kicking them along the floor or throwing them backwards over the shoulder.

Once, when Mary had been detected in drawing when algebra should have been the subject, she was severely scolded, and immediately afterwards tossed back a note to me, which note was seen flying through the air. The room waited in silence while Lady Terese picked it up. It read—“Lady Terese is really an old pig!” and was accompanied by a lightning pencil sketch of our mentor with distinctly pig-like features cleverly suggested. Mary was sent to spend two hours in a dark cell, but we contrived to feed her with all our dainties, and she was so heroically elevated in our regard that she suffered very little.

My best friend at the convent, and indeed for much of my after-life, was another Marie—a cousin through the Orleans line—Marie d'Orleans Chartres. We possessed an intense mutual interest in the history and traditions of the Northern nations of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and England; we used to stimulate and feed those interests by reading Longfellow's marvellous translation of King Olaf's Saga, a translation so fine that one forgets whether one is reading it in English or the original; and Marie carried her interests even a step further when she contracted her marriage to Prince Waldemar of Denmark, Queen Alexandra's youngest brother.

Our first holiday of any duration permitted by the rules of the Sacred Heart was spent by us both at the place the

Duc de Chartres had bought in England when he was exiled from France. It was a lovely estate facing the Channel, over which the homesick fugitives could strain their eyes towards distant France, and it gave us our first taste of county life in England. We were frequently invited to Sandringham, where Princess Alexandra always delighted to speak to us in Danish. She had always spoken her native tongue to her beloved first-born, Albert Victor, and she had many long conversations with us and told us many stories of the old Vikings, and their adventures in the days after the fall of the Roman Empire when their winged helmets came to be dreaded all over Europe.

A distinguished young man of Danish origin was at this time engaged by the Princess as teacher of Danish to Albert Victor, Marie and myself, and in the six weeks during which we received tuition we made wonderful progress in the stirring legends of the northern countries.

In those days, I was particularly fond of fine needlework—indeed, I am so still, and can still work the most intricate and delicate designs. On that holiday, I received much commendation from the Princess for my work, and I was asked to make an altar-cloth for the Altar of Our Lady of Wise Counsel. The cloth took me a long while to make, but it was finally pronounced a work of art, and may yet be seen in the church now belonging to that order in the Rue Madrid.

CHAPTER VIII

1878

At Fredensborg with the Danish Royal family. The vow of the author and the Duke of Clarence. Don Carlos of Bourbon and his tragic daughter.

AFTER our last term at the Sacred Heart, we all went to join Grandmother, who had just concluded a tour of Royal visits, at her beautiful villa of Enerum, a short way from Copenhagen. There we were quite near Fredensborg, the summer residence of the Danish Royal family, where all the relations of that family gathered at intervals during the summer months, round Christian IX and his Queen. There we met at different times Princess Alexandra and Prince Edward of Wales, with their children, Maria Feodiowna and her Consort, the Grand Duke of Russia, the King of Greece and many of the other crowned heads of Europe. From our villa, it was only a matter of an hour's drive to the Palace, and we were back and forth very frequently and informally.

There our little class, Marie of Orleans, the Duke of Clarence and myself, commenced again to study Norse legends and sagas, and what had formerly been a pleasant enough pastime became for all three of us a serious pursuit for we all had the Norse fever in our blood. After a time, Marie left for the Château d'Ese, and then Albert Victor and I were left to go on together.

Our affection grew ever more sincere as childhood ripened into youth, and our mutual interest in our task became more ardent as the task itself became more difficult. He often used to say laughingly to me, "After all, I am a son of old Gardo on Mother's side, and descended from Odin and

Skjald, and am myself a Skjaldringe”—an appellation poetically given to all direct descendants of the Danish Kings. One of the royal and knightly Danish figures in whom we were always especially interested was Eric Ejegod, the Idol of the Nations. He was the forefather of Canute the Great of England, and brother of the Holy Canute who was murdered by the Heathens before the altar of the Cathedral of Odense. This Eric was a very model of a king—one of the most knightly and wise figures who have ever lived.

Prince Albert's favourite story about him concerned that time in his reign when, the Devil fearing his noble influence in the Northland, he caused a man by witchcraft so to anger King Eric that he slew him with his own hand. As penance for his misdeed, Eric vowed to go afoot on a pilgrimage to Rome. His people were so distressed at the news that the men gathered all their rings and vessels of gold and the women their jewels and trinkets, making a vast mountain of treasure which was offered him to pay for Masses for his absolution, so that he should stay in his kingdom. But the King would not break his oath. Crossing the Alps on foot, he rested here in my villa where I am writing this book. Here he met Saint Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, for this villa was then (1098) a famous resting-place for holy wayfarers, and Anselm in his writings paid enthusiastic tribute later to the piety, wisdom and learning of King Eric. This same King Eric made another pilgrimage later to the Holy Land, taking with him his Queen, who died there, and was buried in a cave in the Valley of Josaphit; I later visited her tomb. Eric himself died of sorrow at his loss during his return journey, but his burying place in Cipria is unknown and his memory now lives only in legends.

Prince Albert and I made a holy vow that this knightly and beloved King should not sleep forgotten in his unknown grave, but that a monument in his memory should be erected by us, marking his way to Rome, to remind the generations of the future of him who was one of the most distinguished ancestors of Prince Albert and of the present

Royal family of England. Albert Victor sleeps now beneath his marble sarcophagus at Windsor ; I was left alone to fulfil our sacred promise, and I did it.

Grandmother lived very quietly at this time, and received only old friends, though she frequently visited the old Dowager Queen, only daughter of Frederick VI, himself only son of the unhappy Caroline Matilda, daughter of George III of England. This lady, Queen Caroline of Denmark, was implicated in a political intrigue, separated from her husband, and exiled. The Battle of Copenhagen, in which Nelson destroyed the Danish Fleet and bombarded Copenhagen, was always known in Royal circles to be an act of revenge on the part of England because of the wrong done to the English Princess Caroline. By using his blind eye as he was instructed, Nelson ensured Royal interest in his promotion. The reason given in the history books is only a fiction for the benefit of the general public.

We had at this time a most interesting visit from Don Carlos of Bourbon (the Pretender to the Spanish throne), and the Duchess of Madrid. They had been friends of Grandmother's ever since her husband's diplomatic mission at the Court of Esen Real. They came to us then from Tromsö, which at that time was an unknown township but which has since become a famous resort, partly through their vivid praises of the place.

They were accompanied by their daughter, Donna Elvira de Bourbon—indeed, had been to Tromsö in order that its bracing air might help to heal her lungs, which were thought to be delicate. Donna Elvira was then a mere child, but showed already the promise of that supreme beauty which later was to make her famous throughout the whole world, and which began a series of misfortunes ending in misery, shame and death. Seldom has a young life seemed more full of golden promise ; seldom has such an apparently brilliant future ended in such a tragedy.

CHAPTER IX

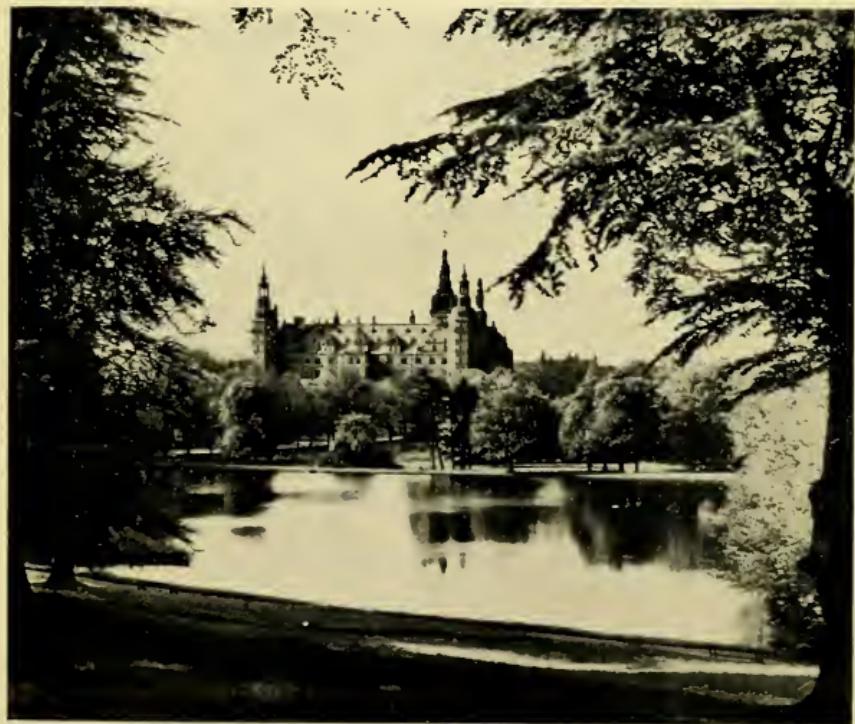
1878

Ghost stories at Fredensborg. A Royal ghost-hunt. A first compliment.

ONE evening shortly after this visit, we were at Fredensborg at a party which included Prince Edward of Wales, Princess Alexandra and almost all the other Royal children of the Danish House. Everything was perfectly *en famille*; etiquette was for the moment laid aside. The elder persons were seated in various parts of the vast *grande salon*, whose windows stood open to the garden, and the silver moonlight streamed into the room, for, by Royal desire, no lamps or candles had been lighted.

The conversation turned on the supernatural, and Prince Edward told how Viscount Knollys had come into personal contact with a spectral caravan in a remote hamlet in Oxfordshire. This caravan passed on nights of full moon over a since disused and overgrown cart-road called Trader Winchcombe's Way, and even in broad daylight the country-folk would not approach the bramble-strewn track. Winchcombe was a trader in wood, who many years previously had killed and plundered a party of people he met on the road; shortly after, he had died in a fit of madness, screaming that he was haunted and that for ever more he must drive furiously up and down the road in his ghostly caravan, till his penance was done. Viscount Knollys, it appeared, had once seen the caravan at full gallop, and did not wish to repeat the experience.

Then the Crown Prince of Denmark said: "We have a ghostly hunt here, that goes right across the country



Amalienborg Palace, Copenhagen, where Queen Alexandra spent her childhood ; and (below) Fredericksborg Castle where she frequently stayed.

from Vordingburg to Gurre Castle, passing very near where we are now sitting. It, also, appears on moonlight nights—just like to-night. One of our ancestors, Waldemar Atterday, was passionately fond of Gurre, and used to exclaim frequently when he was there : ‘ God can keep his Heaven for me, if I can keep Gurre ! ’ For those impious words, he was condemned to ride for ever between the two castles.”

Prince Edward’s voice broke the momentary hush, low and thrilling. “ I fear, my dear, we shall be condemned to chase for ever between Marlborough House at Sandringham ; we have been so very happy there, have we not ! ” he said, turning to Princess Alexandra ; and, getting up, he went over to her, bent on one knee and kissed her hand. Nobody in the world could kiss hands like King Edward—except the Kaiser. When either of these men spoke to a woman, he inclined his head to listen in such a way that you would have thought there was not another woman in the world so well worth listening to. It has been said that King Edward in his youth had his caprices ; however that may have been, no one who knew him ever doubted for one moment how infinitely far above all the rest of the realm of women he treasured the infinite grace and beauty of the lady who became his wife.

“ Tell us something about Waldemar Atterday, Famy,” said Princess Alexandra. “ You know all these traditions.”

“ Waldemar Atterday was a wise politician and a fearless warrior,” I began. “ He conquered the Counts of Holstein, and so it became again ‘ day ’ in Denmark, after black years of war and trouble. His lady love was Tove, a beautiful Princess from Rugea, whom he installed at Gurre Castle. Tove was murdered by Waldemar’s Queen, who caused the bathroom to be overheated till Tove was scalded to death and her exquisite beauty disfigured by the steam. When the two lovers rode together before her death, Waldemar used to say how he would rather have Gurre than Heaven ; and ever since, he and Tove and their courtiers have had their wish, and galloped in ghostly array on moonlit nights in their ancient haunts.”

“ Oh—let us go and *see* the wild hunt that must go on

for ever,” cried Princess Louise (the mother of the present King of Denmark). “This is a moonlight night ; the ghost road is quite near ; let's all go !”

“Hands up everyone who wants to come,” called King George of Greece. The older ladies preferred to stay at home and shook rather disapproving heads, but every other hand went up. Orders were given at once to the Master of Horse, and less than half an hour later a number of coaches awaited us at the doors.

All the young people crowded into a very large coach used for such occasions, and we drove through the moonlit, dewy forests till we reached Gurre Castle ruins. An old woman emerged from the Gate-house to remove the cross-bar that shut out public vehicles, but we all went in on foot. The old crone was trembling and stammering with fear. Once, many years before, she had been wakened by a great noise of horns and voices, and following her habit had hurried out to see who the visitors might be. A long train of men and stately ladies on horseback were gathered there, and neither the people nor their mounts nor the hounds which pressed with lolling tongues at their heels seemed to have eyes—they had red flames in the eye-sockets. As they passed through, one of the riders signed to her to hold out her apron to receive largesse, and with a peasant's cupidity, she did, terrified though she was. Many coins seemed to be thrown, but when she got indoors again after the ghostly cavalcade had passed, the trembling woman only found a lot of holes burned in her apron where the coins had fallen. When she heard us approaching she thought that Waldemar's Hunt had returned, and was terribly afraid.

After she had shown us the burned apron (which she religiously preserved), and we had put some cooler coins in it for her, we went in and sat on the grassy slope near the great ruined tower, once the Ladies' Bower, where poor Princess Tove had been so cruelly murdered. To pass the time while we awaited Waldemar's approach, lackeys served us with refreshments ; and in the Northern moonlight, so mild and quiet and lovely, I was asked to sing. I

had a pleasant soprano voice then, and someone had brought my smallest harp. I sang, “Rememberest thou Gurre,” written by Hans Andersen, and then Prince Albert Victor asked me to sing, “The harp that once through Tara’s Halls,” which, before those dreaming ruins, seemed especially fitting. Everyone joined in the chorus, the voices blending in the night air.

But the wild hunt would not come at our desire, so after a time we packed into the carriages again to return to the Palace. Prince Albert Victor sat next me, and as we went soberly through the shadowy woods he held my hand, bent closer to me and whispered, “Oh, Famy, you *are* lovely ! ”

That was the first compliment of the kind that had ever been paid me. The mystic charm of that night of light and shadow and the wonderful deep blue eyes that met mine made such a deep impression on me that afterwards I was not quite a child any more—I had been changed by that magic whisper to a young maiden with wider thoughts and newer dreams. . . .

When we reached Fredensborg again, Grandmother had left, so we young people had to return to Enerum alone, save for our escort, in the small hours of the morning. None of us wished to talk. I did not go to bed when my maid left me. I stood wondering before my big mirror, watching in its depths the flickering shadows of the leaves and branches outside the window as they played over the image of myself that stood before me. I *was* beautiful ; that I could see, though I had never thought of it before. My heart sang with an unknown joy ; it was sweet, it was lovely, and to me it was a riddle I could not solve. It was a child’s heart awaking, but then I did not know.

A few days later, the Royal party broke up. The Kings went back to take up their sceptres and rule their peoples, the Princes departed to those trainings which fit a man for the heavy task of kingship ; the Queens and Princesses went out to seek the love of their various nations. And we—we were to go to Italy with Grandmother.

CHAPTER X

1878

Trouble in Rome. A piquant story. The Scot abroad. An audience with the Pope. Adventures in Paris. Preparing to meet Queen Victoria.

WE had intended to stay in Rome for several months, but conditions were then sadly troublesome there. All the charm, romance and poetry of the world's most romantic city had departed from the Seven Hills. In 1870, when the Piedmontese troops occupied the city, and it was declared the capital of Italy, seeds of bitter hatred were sown in the hearts of the rival factions. The Pope closed himself in the Vatican, declaring that he was a prisoner there ; society divided sharply into two parts, the "Black Aristocracy" who supported Papal power, bowed to the Vatican as the capital and declared for "Il Papal Re," and the Piedmontese faction for whom Rome in general was the capital and the King the head of the State.

The Black Aristocracy invited Cardinals to their feasts, who came preceded by fire-runners and lackeys, riding in a rumbling coach with a great red umbrella on the top. The rule was that the invitation to the Cardinals was sent to the Curia, and there it was decided which Cardinals should attend the feast. When the dancing commenced at ten o'clock, they left with the same stately ceremony as was practised when they arrived, one by one and escorted by hosts of torch-bearers and attendants.

The Black party showed their hatred of the changes in every possible way. The old Princess Lancelotte had the great gates of her ancient palace closed and nailed as a

sign of lasting mourning, and those gates were not opened until the recent reconciliation between Church and State. The Princess Massuno and many others ceased attending Court, and some even went so far as to refuse Royal commands to meet the King and Queen in Rome, though they would do so outside the city, giving all the homage due to the grand and ancient house of Savoy.

At this time, Roma Lister was one of the most notable personalities in Rome, and gathered round her all that was most distinguished in the art and literature of all nations and all warring parties. Daughter of a former English Ambassador at Rome, she loved Italy and helped to inspire the study of Italian and ancient Roman folklore and history which has since, under the patronage of Queen Margherita, and of Signor Mussolini in later days, taken such a strong grip on the nation as a whole. She was a very gifted woman, and in her father's ancient and shaky coach was always considered one of the sights of Rome.

Grandmother soon tired of the gossip and criticism aroused by her efforts to remain friendly with acquaintances in the two warring Roman factions, and so we went to a villa on Lake Como where she and Grandfather had stayed in earlier days when he was Queen Victoria's envoy to the Papal Court. There our friends of both parties could meet in peace.

We lived very quietly there, though we entertained many old friends. One of the most interesting of them was the Duchess Litta Arese, who was then over eighty years old. At her magnificent family seat at Varese the Austrian Archdukes frequently visited, to hunt deer in the vast adjoining forests, and the Duchess often told how, when the Emperor Franz Joseph was a youth, she had danced with him on his visits to her home. I was to spend several years of my life at that palace later on.

A very piquant story exists about that same Duchess and her especial rival at the Austrian Court, a Duchess of the younger line. The Duchess Litta Arese was a magnificent beauty ; she was French, and the saying went that she had been a public woman in Paris when the Duke married her.

At a grand dinner at the Royal Palace at Milan, the precedence had been given to the Duchess of the elder line, but the other Duchess objected, and as her rival was entering the Royal presence, she dragged her back by the skirt, exclaiming so loudly that all could hear : “ I am not going to permit a French harlot to precede me ! ”

The elder Duchess turned round, stared furiously at her interrupter, and said equally loudly : “ If I *was* a harlot, I am a Duchess now, and *act* like a Duchess ! You have always been a Duchess—you were born one, and could not help yourself ; but you have always acted like a common harlot, and you will always be one ! ” A most unseemly scuffle ensued in the presence, and a Marshal had to interfere and separate the contesting ladies.

We had a long visit from Mary Hamilton, who married the Prince of Monaco. She was distantly related to the Scottish Douglasses of Pianazzo, who were relations of Grandmother's. They had fled from Scotland with Charles Edward Stuart in Jacobite times ; one of them became Master of Horse to Maria Louisa of Austria, Napoleon's widow, and mother of the “ King of Rome,” and others married into the most famous Italian families, which are still proud of their distant Scottish kinship.

There had been while we were in Rome such an amount of gossip about Grandmother's movements that, when he was visiting us, Cardinal Chigi suggested that we should return to the Holy City with him, where we would be granted an audience of the Pope. Isabel asserted that she was not anxious to attend, so I was permitted to go in her place to see the greatest of all modern Popes.

Pius IX had entered the Church only after failing in his ambition to become a cavalry officer, and throughout his career in the Church he never omitted to act the part of a gallant knight towards ladies. We were therefore received into his private library without being kept waiting a moment, and the conversation was almost entirely concerned with mutual memories of old times. Then he gave us the Papal blessing, and himself accompanied us to the doors, opened them for us and walked with us to the centre of the

antechamber—a very great honour. There we made our deepest curtsies, and he lifted his three fingers in a final impressive blessing. Only a month later, we received news of his death.

A few days later, Princess Lancelotte gave a great dinner in Grandmother's honour, at which all the Black Aristocracy attended and two Cardinals and the Abbé Merry del Val were present. His was the most noticeable personality among all the distinguished men who were there ; though he was then only a young man, his diplomacy and charm were already notable. At this banquet, the Princess Lancelotte made a remark which has often since been quoted—that each newborn generation was to be pitied, for whatever progress might do for them, they could never know how beautiful the world had been, or what lovable and distinguished people had lived in it.

That year, we were to be presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria—a ceremony which, according to the creed of the time, was as important as any religious function ! We went to Paris to purchase dresses for the occasion ; that is to say, Isabel and I had to purchase dresses, for Grandmother had her two constitutional Court trains, slightly adjusted to suit the fashions of the day, awaiting her in their cedar-wood chests in London, at the Duchess of Argyll's town house. No one expected the Dowagers of those days to pretend that they were girls, in dress or otherwise ; and the example set by the Queen was quoted in the same words in the *Times* after each Court function : “The Queen wore a train of rich corded silk.” It was always the same, year after year, ornamented with exquisite lace from Ireland. Grandmother wore the magnificent brocades of her youth, and when she died we found in her wardrobes rolls upon rolls of brocades, velvets and satins, dating back perhaps to before the French Revolution, and still not made up. I have to-day dresses made from some of those stuffs, as stiff and new-looking as ever they were.

Such very minor adjustments as had to be made in Court fashions then were usually carried out at home. I remember once when one of Grandmother's brocades had the

sleeves removed and altered, the work was done under the supervision of the now all-powerful McAllister, and by an oversight on her part one sleeve was put back with the flower-pattern growing upwards, while on the other sleeve the flower-heads dropped downwards ! Grandmother never noticed this ; and woe betide anyone else who dared to criticise McAllister's doings ; so the dress was duly worn to Court after Court without a word being said !

Once while we were in Paris, even McAllister was overruled. As we were now considered grown-up, Isabel and I were permitted to have separate maids. Isabel, as always, was given the choice, and decided to keep the maid we had formerly had between us ; and I advertised in *Figaro* for one for myself. One of the many replies came from a young girl who worked as a modiste at the establishment of Madame Cotin, one of our dressmakers, and McAllister was sent with me to interview this applicant.

Madame Cotin assured us that she was “ One ver' nice girl,” and McAllister, in her hard, precise Scotch, asked : “ Are ye sure the lass is nae flighty ? ” “ Non, non, Madame,” came the voluble reply ; “ not flaitie not at all—only a leetle skittie, a leetle larkie ; she is but a young girl—what would you have ? ”—and the dressmaker spread her hands deprecatingly before the resulting frowns. Dear old McAllister was scandalised till I explained that the fault lay more in Madame's English than in the girl's character ; the expressions were ones the dressmaker had heard from her sons, without knowing their meaning. I took a fancy to the girl, and she was engaged.

Her name was Emilie Penerolè, an Alsatian, and she spoke German and French fluently and English moderately, having been, she said, in service in New York. She did not say in what capacity, but later she confided to me that she had been engaged with a variety troupe, singing and dancing in concert halls there. She was a girl of natural good morals, and, disliking their ways of life, she left them and returned to France, seeking a place as a servant in a good family. She had often read in books of the affection between mistresses and their personal attendants, and she sought it.

She grew devoted to me and I became very fond of her ; one does not find that type of servant nowadays !

When I was trying on a hat at Madame Felix's, one of the most famous shops in Paris, I took a fancy to one which had been set aside in a corner. Madame Felix approached it, delicately raised it and turned to me. “ Ma Princesse, cela n'est pas seulement un chapeau, c'est un creation ! ” And she asked three hundred francs for it ! Emilie drew me aside and whispered, “ Leave her the creation, Madame. I will make you one you will like even more.” I was incredulous, for Felix was world-renowned ; but Emilie kept her word. In half a day she had selected stuff, feathers and trimmings and had made me, at a cost of eighty-five francs, a perfect copy of the bonnet I had admired, except that the colours were personally suited to me and blended even better than in the original. Emilie was proud and happy for days after at my satisfaction.

My Court dresses were prepared by old John Worth himself, at his *salons* in the Rue de la Paix, where he could arrange the lights and mirrors to his satisfaction and call upon the most brilliant members of his staff to give opinions. For in those days the fitting of a dress was a matter for an artist ; it did not consist merely in snipping a rough shape into a few yards of soft material. A great compliment was paid me by old Worth, when he said it had never been his good fortune and honour to drape so perfect a figure as mine. He was a world authority, and he never praised lightly ; it was said that he preferred to preserve a critical and condemning silence. Next in his opinion came Donna Elvira of Bourbon, but she was not quite so tall, though her beauty was already far-renowned.

Paris at that time was full of distinguished people preparing for the English Courts. We met Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender, his splendid consort the Duchess of Madrid, Donna Elvira, and many others. The Princess Dolgorenski visited us frequently, though in general Grandmother disliked Russians—society had so often proved that if you scratch a Russian, you find a Tartar. But this Princess was born a Rohan, and to Grandmother it made all the difference !

Cassy Hamilton, who had been a school friend of mine at the convent, was there with her mother, Mrs. George K. Hamilton, a typical American, proud of her husband's old family and prodigal of her own limitless dollars, so that she preferred paying the most extravagant prices wherever she went. She was very proud of her French, which was atrocious, and was confident she never misused a single word. Once, when she left the Bon Marché by the wrong door and so could not find her carriage, she shouted to a passing *fiacre*, “*Cochon, cochon, etez-vous fiancé ?*” The man naturally enough disliked to be called in such a way, as any Frenchman will understand ! But, turning, he saw an exquisitely beautiful young woman—he was French—he smiled and came up to her. “*Voulez-vous avoir moi ?*” enquired Mrs. Hamilton, smiling too. The bargain was made, though very likely the man regretted that the state of being “*fiancé*” only lasted as far as the Hôtel Continental ! Everybody loved Mrs. Hamilton—she was like a generous, laughing child.

CHAPTER XI

1879

Drawing-rooms in the Queen's time. The Levee of those days. A meeting with Princess—now Queen—Mary. An unconventional rencontre with Queen Victoria.

LONDON at last—and all the solemn preparations for our Court presentation ! Lessons of earlier days were repeated ; we practised how to gather the long train of the skirt with the left foot, how to curve an arm most gracefully to receive over it the train after the usher had gathered it from trailing at its full length while passing through the Presence Room, how to drop the Royal curtsey—it seemed as if we had entered another world, after our gay, informal life in Paris.

The Royal Drawing-rooms of those days were very different indeed from what they have since become. The Sovereign was not then a person so much as a power, a glory, a representation of the world's mightiest Empire. Commoners were few and far between, and there were no gaping, curious Americans of the "new dollar" type. The ancient aristocracy of England and the Continent appeared, the older members in stately trains that might have been let loose to find their way and curtsey for themselves, they had been there so many times, and the younger people quiet and modest. There were a few select persons from "the other side," mostly of pure Puritan ancestry, and they were carefully chosen and presented by the American Minister—he had not then been raised to the rank of Ambassador. Those who could only count their ancestry back to "ready-made clo'" dealers from the Bowery were then rigidly excluded.

Foreign princes and diplomats came in from a separate entrance to the Presence Chamber, where Her Majesty the Queen of England and Empress of India was seated on a throne, simply yet gorgeously dressed in brocade and priceless lace, wearing her historic jewellery and with the broad blue ribbon of the Garter over the full bust. As one passed, one saw nothing but that majestic presence, heard the sweet and melodious voice, received a simple, kindly word and the smile that enslaved one for ever. Say they were stereotyped if you will, criticise if you can—but I know who saw her and have seen very many Royal personages that in the presence the most bitter critics wished only to bend the knee and enemies found their enmity stilled before the ruler who nobly personified the very greatest epoch in all Britain's glorious history.

There were no refreshments offered then, and one saw many a strained face in the glaring daylight, though the magnificent evening dresses stood as stiffly as ever. Standing in the outer antechambers, with a heavy train over one arm and bearing the cumbersome bouquet that custom prescribed, many an elderly lady fainted and had to be carried down to her coach, to awake to cruel disappointment.

Even in those distant days, the crowds delighted to watch the coaches as they drove up to the Palace. The line was not so rigidly guarded then, and many a curious wife from the East End had a chance to look her fill at the brilliant toilets of the pretty debutantes. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who was a famous figure at that time, once found an old Irishwoman standing on the step of her coach and staring right into the window. A shocked policeman came hurrying up, but the Baroness, instead of complaining, looked at the officer with an Irish twinkle in her blue eyes, and said : “ Och, how did *she* get loose then ? ” Once, when the Maharajah of Cooch Behar was driving to a Levee in all his Oriental splendour, the traffic was stopped, and a couple of young men looked into the coach. “ My eye, John ! ” exclaimed one of them. “ Look at that ! ” The Maharajah smiled and said : “ Yes, look, my good fellow,” whereupon

the second sightseer opened his eyes and mouth, and finally whispered in awed accents : “ It speaks English ! ”

For my presentation, we went to the Palace in the Duchess of Argyll's coach, as Grandmother's, which had been stationed in London for several generations, had grown so rickety that we dared not enter it. The papers spoke of the presentation, and mentioned that I and the Princess Daisy of Pless were the two tallest girls present. That was the only time I met this well-known and fêted lady, and we never got to know each other, though we moved in much the same circles when in England.

One glorious afternoon during this London visit, as we were leaving a charity fête at Stafford House, Grandmother was descending the staircase when she was hailed by a very stout lady with a highly coloured countenance, who exclaimed : “ I am *so* glad to see you again, Millicent ; I've looked for you everywhere and never met you. This is my little girl.” With this, she caught a rather squarely-built girl of about fourteen by the shoulder and pulled her sharply forward. The girl blushed deeply and dropped a deep curtsey, though obviously rather embarrassed, while I looked on with all the hauteur natural to a young lady of seventeen when meeting a mere child of twelve ! The lady was the Princess Mary Adelaide of England, and the little girl was the present Queen Mary, the worthy and fitting successor of Queen Victoria—what more can be said ?

We stayed for a while at Sandringham, and the Princess of Wales was as sweet as ever, but life was very quiet there for the Princes were away at sea. After that, we spent a few days with the Marchioness of Aylesbury in the Isle of Wight. The Marchioness was a famous wit, and had been a notable beauty in her day ; even then her grand old-fashioned toilets, her poke-bonnets and side-curls and her rapier-like tongue were famous throughout England. She was notably impatient with presumptuous tradespeople and the early members of the “ beerage,” and right well could she put them in their place.

I remember once when we had accompanied the old and vinegary lady to a great London store, whose owner

had married his daughter to a minor German Prince, and so fancied that he could safely hob-nob with the aristocracy. When Grandmother and the Marchioness appeared, the proprietor himself advanced to meet them, and, washing his hands in invisible soap and imperceptible water, he began with an important cough : “ I saw your ladyship at the Opera last night. I trust that your ladyship enjoyed the performance ? ” A pair of very long-handled tortoiseshell lorgnettes was raised with dreadful slowness, and the person was inspected carefully. “ My good man,” said the Marchioness at last, “ we came to buy a carpet from you.” The good man took the rebuff in silence and began to display his carpets ! At another big store often frequented by ladies of the Court, one of the young women assistants whose voice, whether naturally or deliberately I do not know, was regrettably haughty and distant, came up to the Marchioness one morning and enquired coldly : “ Are any of the Gentlemen waiting on you ? ” “ Yes,” came the prompt answer, “ the Nobleman with the bald head is attending to me, my good girl.” That story had been quoted elsewhere, I believe, out of its true context ; I was present at its origin.

Another old lady who was also a great favourite of the Queen was Lady Dorothy Neville, and she also was present while we were in the Isle of Wight at this time, the Queen being then at Osborne. Lady Dorothy had been compelled by circumstances to give up her stately old home in Russell Square and go into a small flat. In her tiny drawing-room, she still had all her priceless old Dresden and Sèvres china exposed on brackets, but badly crowded because of the lack of space. She told the Queen one day how her sister-in-law and small nephew called on her, and when they were leaving, the little boy exclaimed wonderingly to his mother : “ Why, Mamma ! I did not know that Aunt Dorothy lived in a pantry ! ”

One other especial favourite was the Duchess of Sutherland. Her husband had at that time already deserted Dunrobin Castle, and spent most of his time in the States on his inherited lands in Virginia, in company with the notorious Mrs. Blair. This lady later became Duchess of

Sutherland herself, got into trouble over certain false documents, and finally ennobled Holloway Gaol with her distinguished presence, having her apartments there furnished with pale blue satin-covered furniture, that shade being her favourite tone, and harmonising perfectly with her notable blonde beauty.

Grandmother, who was one of the Queen's best friends, and the other old ladies, were invited to dinner constantly at Osborne House, two or three at a time, so as to make up a party of six, including Her Majesty, and two of the Maids of Honour or Ladies-in-Waiting in turn. Each person invited received a printed command signed by the Marshal of the Court, that being the established ceremonial.

One forenoon on such an occasion, Isabel and I had got a little ahead of Grandmother and her two special friends, the Duchess of Sutherland and Lady Dorothy, as we walked slowly through Osborne Park. We two were talking animatedly when ahead of us we saw the Dowager Lady Churchill approaching, accompanied by a quaint-looking, tubby little lady with a short serge skirt, solid walking shoes and a big mushroom hat. We greeted Lady Churchill in the polite and rather formal fashion which we had been taught to observe towards all the older ladies of the Court, but at the same time, since she was a personal friend, in quite a companionable manner. We were therefore very concerned when she merely looked at us with shocked surprise, though the dumpy little lady nodded to us, smiled and nodded again, as they passed on.

“ Goodness ! ” exclaimed Isabel to me. “ What have we done to Lady Churchill ? ” Very much astonished, we looked round, and were just in time to see the three old ladies who were following us dipping to the ground with profound curtsies ! That strange-looking little woman was Queen Victoria ; in those days she did not invariably use her little donkey-cart, as she did later on, but preferred to walk once in a while.

We were immediately called back, and made our deep and dutiful obeisances, while Her Majesty spoke most graciously to us. The moment she opened her mouth, nobody

could mistake the Queen, though we who had been presented to her in her jewellery and Royal robes of state did not recognise her immediately at our unexpected rencontre. The lovely, low, musical voice, the infinite dignity and sweetness of manner, and the effortless and unstudied air of command were unmistakable. Historians and contemporaries have all agreed that no woman ever lived who had such a wonderful grip on her people's imagination or such a hold in their hearts as Victoria Regina Imperatrix.

Among all the many royalties I have met, only one ever approached the Queen in those qualities, and that one was the Emperor William of Germany, her grandson. Let his political enemies say what they will, no man but he could have inspired Germany to her recent long and misguided struggle in the fields of war. His charm, too, was infinite, and he possessed in a magnificent degree the Royal power of making his hearer feel that no other person in the world could be so interesting or so important.

I remember a dance at Potsdam, when I was wearing a very rare and exquisite flounce of ancient Venetian lace. The Kaiser remarked to me on the wonderful beauty of the web. “ So very old,” he said musingly, “ it must indeed be very frail.”

“ It is,” I replied. “ Queen Margherita had some she valued very much, and ordered that it should be put on a favourite robe, but in the attempt it fell to pieces.”

At that very moment, my flounce came into contact with his sword, and a piece of the border was detached. At once, he took from his pocket a small pair of scissors, and, bowing, delicately cut away the torn piece, returning it to me. “ Thus it will be easier to mend,” he said, after making an apology for the mishap.

“ Your Highness thinks of everything,” I said.

“ Only of my first duties,” he replied, “ and the nearest is the first.”

It was not so much the words, but the infinite tact and cavalier grace with which he said them and performed the little action that made it live in my memory where, perhaps,

more important incidents are not recalled. The charm and kindness of Queen Victoria lived again in him.

At Osborne, everyone arranged their doings according to the way in which Her Majesty passed her day. The morning was spent reading alone, or aloud to a small circle of friends, then a little music followed by a short walk, then luncheon, repose, little unconventional visits, tea at half-past four, and thereafter retirement till the time came to dress for dinner. The Princess Beatrice always read aloud to the Queen for half an hour in the morning and half an hour after tea, her reading voice being wonderfully good.

Grandmother found it her sacred duty to follow this example, so Lady Isabella, her friend and attendant, read to her, for Mademoiselle did not read English well. My sister Isabel did not read particularly well either ; our brothers said that it was not her intention to do so ; and consequently I was preferred.

The Rev. Sir Sidney Streatfield, a cousin of Sir Henry Streatfield, Secretary to Queen Alexandra, was then in charge at St. Mary's. He was a devoted student of ancient lore, and possessed profound knowledge of Druid days and of the old Irish and Scandinavian legends, and he wrote many learned books on these subjects. Many of his writings have since been used as references for the compilation of folk-lore books, and very often they have been quoted as original by those who borrowed them, as well as acknowledged by the more accurate of his followers.

He wrote a most interesting book, *The Days of Fire*, which later served as a guide to Sibyl Countess of Cromarty in her most fascinating volumes on Celtic antiquity in relation to Danish and Icelandic traditions. He was one of the daily visitors to Grandmother at this time of our stay in the Isle of Wight, and he very greatly assisted my studies in the ancient lore. He encouraged the Duke of Clarence also in the same subject, much to Queen Alexandra's delight.

CHAPTER XII

1879-80

Adventures in the Highlands. The shameless ancestor. Hallow-e'en revels. Denmark again. A romantic meeting. Prince Edward saluted from Hamlet's castle.

WE were to pass the remainder of the after-season in the ancestral Highland home, for Grandmother wished us to know something of the lands of our ancestors in the Gordon country. The ancient castle set among the heather hills was a great novelty to us, accustomed as we were to an unending round of gaiety and Court life ; and Isabel at least very strongly disapproved, and made no secret of the fact. She did not, however, show her disapproval to Grandmother ; even she would not go quite as far as that.

We received a post only three times a week, and then a mounted groom had to be sent to the nearest post office to collect it. Every day, the pipers played while we were at dinner, marching up and down the broad stone terrace under the window of the ancient banqueting hall, their pipe-ribbons streaming and kilts swinging, and always they began and ended with the famous Gordon call, at which Grandmother's eyes lighted and her face grew proud as her Highland blood raced to the stirring refrain.

We lived the methodical and regular life of a typical Scottish family of the time—it seemed to us as though we had slipped back by magic into the Middle Ages ! Every Sabbath, we went to the kirk to listen to the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Walsh ; one Sabbath he spoke to us in Gaelic and one in English, but we never knew which language he was using as it sounded to us exactly the same ! His sermon

alone invariably took one hour and a quarter to deliver. It was divided into points, and just as we were hoping that the end had almost come we would distinguish the words : “ Ma frien's, fully tae explain the farrth point, Ah hae to return tae the second ”—and so on. This was particularly disconcerting when we found ourselves suddenly slipping back from the “ seventeenthly ” to the “ thirdly ” !

We were accommodated in the family pew, a massive black-oak construction something like an immense four-poster bedstead, with a ponderous door that screamed on its hinges as if dominated by ill-will whenever one attempted to open or close it. No one ever dared to grease it. My brother said it was a part of the official church music, and harmonised with the other parts as well as any other individual note. Grandmother invariably fell asleep during the sermon, and the young people whispered that McAllister had a standing order to nudge her on the elbow when Mr. Walsh was getting ready to utter the final “ Amen ” ! When she was mildly teased with this circumstance, she could not altogether restrain half a Scotch smile, but always said that only very naughty children would ever dream of such a thing !

All our old servants were gathered about us, and the staff represented all nations and several distinguished Originals, and they were ruled with a rod of iron, and yet with unfailing kindness and dignity by McAllister and our old Italian major-domo, who had been in the family service for some sixty years. Our old still-room woman was visited at this time by a sister whom she had not seen for many years, and much rapture was displayed at their meeting. The old Scotswoman was taken about and shown everything in the castle ; and coming from her poor old cottage in the heather, everything was a marvel to her. She was taken into the portrait gallery, and the pictures of ancestral Stuarts and Gordons were shown her, clad in uniforms, armour and wigs and ruffles ; before each of them she dropped a reverent curtsey, exclaiming at the beauty of the Court dresses and haughty loveliness of the women, and remarking in wonder and admiration how it must have been worth living in such times and when such people walked the earth.

Passing out of the portrait gallery, she came into a room where the works of great painters of the past were displayed, and the first classic picture that met her gaze was that of Venus rising from the foam, and standing poised on her traditional shell. The dear old lady was terribly taken aback, and stood for over a minute before the masterpiece primming her lips and fighting down her evident disapproval. But she could not master it entirely. “ Was *she* yin of the family ? ” she asked at last, in accents that might have made Venus herself blush. When she was assured that she was not, she nodded and said : “ I'm glad o' it. She's no' half decent ! ”

Another amusing old woman was a Welsh servant who had been with us in America. She was in a state of constant delight after we brought her to the British Isles for it had always been a serious saying with her, “ If I live I want to be burried in Wales ! ” and now she felt that her hopes would be realised !

Once, when we were walking, we lost our way, and asked direction of an old woman we met. She looked keenly at us with her little sharp eyes and said : “ What for dae ye want to ken that ? ” We assured her we had no evil intentions, and so she told us to go straight ahead a wee whilie, then turn tae the left, then tae the richt as far as Tulsie's cottage, and then tae the left again, and we would be hame within the half hoor ! When we told her we knew neither Tulsie nor her cottage, she exclaimed, “ Weel, whaur dae ye come from that ye ken neither Tulsie nor her cottage ? Hoo can that be ? ” And further questioning revealed the fact that she thought the end of the world was just beyond Strathpeffer !

We visited several of the neighbouring Highland families, but visits then were not like the half-hour calls of to-day. We stayed for half a day and often longer ; it was then quite correct for the tire-woman who accompanied us to wear a poke-bonnet for travelling and change to a lace cap, carried in a wicker-work special basket, in the house. The ladies took their fancy-work, stayed for tea and often for dinner, and returned home again after, escorted by riding grooms

bearing lanterns or torches, the lumbering old four-in-hand travelling bumpily over the ill-kept and difficult roads.

The culmination of our Highland stay was to be the feast of Beltane, when there was a Gathering of the Clans in Grandmother's honour. A "slaughter of the innocents" took place in preparation, and dozens of calves and pigs and, I think, hundreds of poultry were killed, vast quantities of bread and cakes and scones were baked, and barrels of home-brewed and demijohns of whisky came to light from the ancestral cellars. Hundreds of retainers and their friends and relations came tramping over the hills, and everything was made ready for wassail and merrymaking, on a scale that befitted an ancient clan. There was a gathering of Gordons and Grahames and Buccleughs and Douglases and McLeans; there was feasting upon the mountain deer, and laughter and drinking and the keening of the pibroch and the shouting of lusty men. My brother said that each of the seventeen pipers who played massed marches and laments together played his own tune and time, but old Donald McDonald, who was then considered the finest piper in the Highlands, said that he had never heard grander music.

In the flaring, smoking light of a thousand pine torches, the "Ghillum Ghallum" was stepped, and Grandmother dutifully lifted her dainty foot over the leader's broad-sword, following the ancient custom. The dance was led by my distant cousin, Hamish Cunningham, and braw he looked in his swinging kilts, which displayed his beautiful statuesque figure as only the kilts can. There followed the Highland Fling, and then the delightful Strathspey, gracefully footed with gleeful shouts by the youths and maidens of the ancient races which had for centuries preserved the same traditional dances.

Interspersed with these were a few more modern measures, with now and then an ancient ballad, or the recitation by a barbaric-looking bard of some blank verse telling in sounding words the great deeds of some mighty hero of the past whose descendants were present, and sat listening with flashing eyes and hands creeping to dirks and claymores.

Grandmother retired at midnight, but the feast went on,

dance and music waxed wilder than ever, torches flared and shouts awoke the echoes of the crowding hills, and wassail and merrymaking went on till the first streaks of dawn crept redly over the shoulders of the black eastern mountains. It was voted a Gathering well worthy of the great traditions of the Highland Gordons, and I have seen nothing like it elsewhere.

We remained for a real Scottish Hallow-e'en. All the most gruesome stories we could think of were duly told, and all the time-honoured customs kept up—going out alone from a back door after repeating certain formulæ, to meet “the true love to come,” looking down into a bowl of water to see his face form among the ripples, and finally going backwards to bed after repeating solemnly the Scotch Litany :

“ Fra' ghoulies an' ghaisties an' la*ng*-legged beasties
An' a' whilk at nicht gaes—Save us, oh Gracious God ! ”

We went back to Denmark to pass the winter at our lovely old villa there. The Princess of Wales was indisposed that season, and the Court was very quiet, as no other foreign royalties were expected in Denmark. There were only informal gatherings at the Palace ; very enjoyable, but without etiquette or pretence. There were also a few grand balls at the houses of the old nobility.

Grandmother had arranged to receive Elvira de Bourbon that winter, as there was still some doubt about her health, and a northern climate was considered advisable for her. Don Carlos and his Duchess accompanied their favourite child, and later they made a short stay at Stockholm with friends. Elvira was accompanied by her old governess and a single maid ; she accepted invitations together with us, and her dark Spanish beauty was very much admired in northern society—so much so, in fact, that it became a nuisance to her to receive such marked attentions.

My sister and I continued our studies in northern lore, turning our attention to the old Edda, and afterwards working through Voltaire and Molière, and even attacking Racine. We were often mildly chaffed about turning into

blue-stockings, and joining the ink-stained sisterhood, for learning among women was not then much encouraged. Elvira did not join our studies or even talk Danish, but that was not a great drawback, since the Court language at that time was French at the northern Courts. French is still spoken so generally and perfectly in Denmark that you may imagine yourself at times back in the reign of Marie Antoinette.

In the following spring, Donna Elvira returned to Italy, and we followed the Court to Fredensborg, where the Princess of Wales and the whole of the younger part of the British Royal family was expected, except Prince George, who was then constantly at sea. King George of Greece and his Consort and family came, too, and the castle filled up with the nobility and royalty of Europe.

I shall never forget ‘hat season. It was not a season—it was an unending Midsummer Night’s Dream, a fairyland of birdsong and flowers, of silver moonlight with islands of shadow beneath lofty oaks and whispering lindens, of murmuring breezes and the sleepy sound of waves.

One magic evening, I had tired a little of the gavotte and minuet, and had wandered out on to the wide terrace, watching the silvery gardens and grateful for the cool, caressing air. I wandered down the broad, shallow, stone steps ; it was as if my heart bade me wait for something to happen, some prince of faery to come riding by. Soon a tall, graceful youth stood at my side. I did not notice him come, but I knew it was right that he should be there. The dreamy music of the minuet and the faint throb of time-sure feet on the polished floors within the Palace came softly out to us like the beating of a happy heart, a nightingale trilled passionately from a nearby bush, the lindens whispered and the waves of the lake murmured enchanted words to us. The Prince took my arm ; he spoke, and I answered. I do not know what he said or what I replied ; but the abiding joy and comfort of that deep, innocent, unshadowed friendship is with me yet, and will go on with me beyond the grave, for ever.

We walked slowly down to the lake, speaking hardly

at all. He unfastened the boat, and we gently drifted out on to that bright shield of moonlit water, alone together in our Land of Dreams. That was over fifty years ago ; to-day, after a long life of many hard realities, it still seems a dream—one of the most beautiful of all my dreams.

One morning, a day or two later, we found when we arrived at Fredensborg that all the members of the Royal party had dispersed in different directions at their own pleasure. Albert Victor was alone in the great entrance-hall when I went in ; he was reading some English newspapers by the big open fire, and he came across to meet me as soon as he heard my step outside. Grandmother went up to pay her respects to Queen Louise, who had kept her apartments that morning, and we were left alone.

He showed me some pictures in the *Strand Magazine* of the Gathering of the Clans at Braemar, and we began talking about Scottish folk songs. Isabel, who was with us, said shortly that she would leave us to our ancient history, and the Duke promptly advised her to seek out his sisters and their ladies, whose conversation would be more to her liking.

“ I shall most certainly like it better than what is offered here,” she replied tartly. I told her that she should speak with more respect to England’s future King. “ I shall never want in respect, but my opinion will always be my own,” she answered ; and sweeping us a deep curtsey whose veneration was a little marred by a mocking smile, she turned and ran off.

The Duke and I went up to the wonderful grand *salon* whose vaulted roof goes up through two stories, and I sat down at the piano and played some soft preludes. “ Do play and sing one of those traditional songs we were talking about just now,” said Albert Victor softly to me. I began, “ Young Randolph was a bonnie lad,” but he stopped me. “ I don’t like that one—I don’t like the way in which his true love kept her word to him,” he said. So instead I sang : “ It fell upon a day, an’ a bonnie summer’s day,” which is still a world-wide favourite.

Albert Victor sat down on a low stool beside me and idly

turned the pages of the magazine. I commenced, “Yes-tre'en, the Queen had four Maries,” but he stopped me at once. “Not that—it's too sad. There's sadness enough in the world without our seeking ; let's forget it.”

I had just commenced a Danish lyric when we heard carriage-wheels in the courtyard outside, and a minute later the Greek Royal children burst in on us, followed by Queen Olga and her ladies. A little later, everyone who was staying to luncheon assembled, and we went into the dining-room, as usual without any pretence at formal etiquette, for although King Christian was one of the world's most important monarchs and was closely related to nearly every throne in Europe, he was a most kindly and unassuming gentleman as well.

Afterwards, we dispersed according to inclination, and I went to the rose bower with Princess Louise and her suite. As I was going out, Albert Victor whispered to me : “Please steal a minute as we did the other evening. I couldn't finish nearly all I had to say this morning.” Later, Queen Louise sent for us to come and take tea with her in her boudoir, where we all listened to the most interesting discourse of the old ladies—in those days, young ladies were expected to listen rather than to impose strident voices on the conversation of their elders. After tea, Grandmother drove home, leaving us at the Palace.

When I retired to the rooms which were always put at my disposal, in order to change my dress, my maid handed me a slip of paper on which were written these words : “Remember to-night.” Dinner was, as usual, a brief affair, for the Danish Royal family did not care to sit long over meals, and when it was concluded we all assembled in the grand *salon* and the adjoining drawing-rooms for music and conversation, but no dancing—that is to say no formal dancing, though if an attractive waltz happened to be played, any of the young people who wished to do so were at liberty to step it together for pleasure. In any case, conversation interested us, for then it was a pleasing interchange of wit and wisdom ; nowadays that is entirely a lost art.

Queen Louise often fell asleep during the evening, though

no one was supposed to know this, and Princess Alexandra of Wales rested quietly in a deep arm-chair at her side and “thought over matters,” as she smilingly said, though sometimes we rather fancied that she slept also. On the evening in question, I had put a light wrap over my shoulders, for I was sitting next an open french window ; and when Princess Louise, who shared my seat, was asked to step a waltz of a particularly seductive rhythm, I was left alone, and stepped out on to the terrace.

It was a glorious evening, the moon made everything as bright as day, and made a magic country of the lovely Palace gardens around. The *salon* was but dimly lighted, as was usual when no great function was going on, and I slipped away unnoticed, and descended the wide marble steps, crossed the dew-fresh lawn, and found Albert Victor there already in the shadow of a great whispering linden.

We talked for a minute or two in low voices, and then went down together to the lake. No word had been said as to what we should do, but as if it had all been settled he untied a boat, put his arm about my waist and helped me into a seat in it, picked up the oars and pulled leisurely out on to the rippling water. “Tell me again the legend of the Lake,” he whispered.

“There was once a lovely Egyptian Princess,” I began, “who by magic could turn herself into a swan, and here she flew seeking that which she did not know and could not name, away in the silver North. Two of her ladies came with her, for them also could she change into swans, and she cared not to face the journey quite alone. To them she told her secret, and then they grew jealous of her, for even as she had surpassed all women in beauty, so now she was the most lovely swan the eye had ever seen, and they were but plain compared to her. So what did they do but fly away with her swan's garb and leave her there alone, weeping and in despair, friendless in a foreign land.

“But there rode by a Prince of the High North and found her there ; and down he came from his horse and knelt before her, declaring in passionate words that never had he seen such beauty ; and him she married with great

pomp. But now, though she loved him as the flower loves the sun, yet was she wistful for her own land ; and in the cold, clear, starry Northern nights came to her memories of the slow blue Nile, the very whisper of the languorous wind among the roses of the South, and the smell of spices swooning in the heat. The silver ripples of Fredensborg Lake faded, and she saw the great lilies floating under the Egyptian moon ; she pined and she pined till the Prince who loved her fitted out a galley with a great golden prow and a silken sail, gave it in charge of twenty of his mightiest oarsmen, and sent it southward with its oars smiting the singing seas to take his Princess back to her own land.

“ But even then, alas ! the poor Princess could not be comforted, for had not her true love to stay and rule his people in the far North, and how could the roses be red or the skies blue without him ! She longed and longed for that handsome Prince, and so in time she died of sorrow because she could not have both the stars of Egypt and the kisses of the Northland ; but her loveliness before which all men grew silent came back to rest on the Palace Lake, and never are waves so tumbling or roses so sweet, never shine stars so silvery or nightingales sing with such passionate love as here—and thus—and now ! ”

In the silence that followed when my voice had died, I heard the water rippling from our bows and even the splash and dip of the oars had ceased. There was a slight tremor through the boat, and I looked round—we had reached the other side. The spell was broken ; we were a pair of active, happy friends again. We talked for a minute, and discussed returning. “ I do so want a drink,” said the Duke, laughing. “ Let's go and see what we can find.”

The boat was tied up, and we walked away together towards some lights some distance from us, which marked the outskirts of the village which stands opposite Fredensborg Palace. We came to a sort of summer-house where a number of people were sitting, talking and drinking and singing, and they received us with great courtesy and suppressed enthusiasm, realising that we must have come from the Palace but not for a moment dreaming who this

young man was who had come thus unconventionally among them. We had some lemonade and honey-wine and excellent home-made cakes, and then we went back the way we had come. No one had even missed us, for the party was very numerous and everyone did just as they wanted at such gatherings. When I kissed my darling Princess Alexandra's hand before leaving, she looked at me with a strange, loving expression in her wonderful eyes—that was all.

The Swedish Royal family came for a short stay at Fredensborg, and banquet after banquet was arranged with such skill and tact as I have seldom seen displayed. The Baron de Lovenskjold was Grand Marshal, and under his inspired guidance everyone was happy and no one ever felt constrained or offended. The old Queen of Sweden, a decided Puritan, observed to Grandmother, who was her most intimate friend, that she had never seen youth enjoying life so thoroughly and at the same time preserving such decorum and dignity. There was a “Swedish evening” when the Swedish two-step and the Norwegian Spring-dands were performed, and even then none of the maidens stepped higher or displayed more ankle than Her Majesty could approve and commend.

We accompanied the Royal party to Elsinore on their way home on a Swedish man-of-war, massed bands played the National Anthems of both nations, and immediately afterwards as Prince Edward of Wales's ship came in, they struck up “God Save the Queen.” The Royal salute came thundering and echoing across the water from Kronberg, Hamlet's castle, and such cheers went up from the multitude as I have seldom heard. May God always grant such cheers to our rightful rulers from the true hearts of their loving subjects!

CHAPTER XIII

1880

Balls in the States. A Canadian reception. McAllister has her doots. Work in Sing-Sing.

WE went back to the States again shortly after this, and it seemed as if we had never been away. It always was like that to me when we returned to America—I felt at home there immediately I set foot on shore. We went back to the old Stuyvesant Palace in the centre of New York ; the traffic was creeping nearer even then, but so far the ancient homestead held its own with notable dignity, the elevated railways not then having been invented.

It was getting very cold ; the central heaters were in use everywhere, and the small ponds in Madison Square were already covered with ice, though when we had left the European side we had experienced nothing more than slight autumnal freshness.

America had not then adopted the European season, commencing with the New Year and Carnival time ; festivals then commenced with Thanksgiving Day, and thereafter balls and receptions were given by all the older families. We had stopped on our way over, spending a few days in Paris, and New York declared that such toilets as ours had never before been seen there. The first great ball was held at the Rieves homestead in Washington Square, and it marked the opening of the New York season. My brothers came home from Heidelberg, where they were studying, and brought friends with them, so that the great house was full to overflowing. But, “Where there is room in the heart, there is room in the house,” as the old Edda proverb runs.

After New Year commenced the season proper, and we went on a visit to Canada, where the Niagara was frozen, and a vast Ice Carnival had been arranged by Lord Lorne, who had succeeded our friend Lord Dufferin as Governor-General. The carnival was under the special patronage of his consort, H.R.H. Princess Louise, and society from all over Canada and America flocked to be present.

The reception and the fête lasted for three days, and then came the grand State Ball, held in tremendous erections of wood and canvas which had been built on the frozen river. It seemed wonderful to the Americans who attended that they had only to walk on to the ice to find themselves in what might be considered a substitute for a Royal Court, and that they could be presented to Royalty without the trouble of going through Embassies and other ceremonials. Also, they were very glad not to be subjected to the long hours of waiting, wearing heavy trains and carrying cumbersome bouquets which always seemed to be in the wrong place. A curtsey of a sort was all that was needed, and even if it was rewarded by a rather acid smile, the smile was a Royal one ! The Princess had not represented Majesty for long enough then to have acquired that stereotyped grimace which the uninitiated believe to be “ Her Majesty's Gracious Smile,” but what she produced did for the occasion, and dancing and gaiety went on into the small hours, long after the Royal party had left, their departure being carried out as inconspicuously as possible so that no show of indifference or tiredness might be apparent.

The affair was a great success, and the ancient Canadian families, many of whom were directly descended from the houses of the old French regime, displayed beautiful and picturesque toilets, which, if they were a little old-fashioned, were still distinctive and in striking contrast to the glaring modernity and bad taste of some of the American females who were present. The Canadian ladies wore historic jewellery in magnificent settings, making a most brilliant effect without the least suggestion of vulgarity.

We stopped at Washington on our way home again, and spent a gay time attending invitations to banquets with the

older American families there. Our last ball was held on Shrove Tuesday at Secretary Blaines' house. The Diplomatic Corps attended at full strength, and we had saved our most effective dresses for the occasion, which, like everything undertaken by the Blaines family, was beautifully arranged and exquisitely presented. The invitation was for eight o'clock, and dancing went on till midnight, with great rejoicings. Then a great bell was rung in the library, the music was hushed, and in the pause that ensued we could hear all the clocks of the city chiming their answer. At that moment, a number of people in the costume of monks and nuns appeared, and offered a hood or a cowl to each guest present, and we then all went our various ways. The Catholics all went to the nearby cathedral, where the ash was being distributed to mark the commencement of Lent.

We went back to New York, and shortly after my brothers returned to Heidelberg to resume their studies, and the old house became very quiet. We were visited by the Governor-General and his wife, as Princess Louise wanted to see Washington and New York, and chose Lent for her visit so that she would not have to accept invitations which otherwise it might have been difficult to refuse without hurting the feelings of some of America's foremost citizens.

The Princess could be very pleasant, but she was somewhat capricious, and at times she would make it clearly understood—perhaps more clearly than was altogether pleasant or diplomatic under the circumstances—that she was the daughter of the Queen! Her manner towards Lord Lorne was sometimes rather embarrassing, and only Grandmother of all New York at that time knew how to treat these moods, smoothing out difficulties and settling little awkward situations with such sweet, smiling decision, so quietly and so firmly that the Princess herself was all repentance and smiles afterwards from sheer gratitude. Often, at such times, I noticed the grateful expression on Lord Lorne's handsome face, for his task as a representative of England was not made the easier by them. The Princess,

too, was inclined to be jealous of her much-admired husband, though he was at all times most careful and correct in his deportment towards the young American beauties who flocked around him, and most attentive and considerate towards the Princess herself.

It was at about this time McAllister suffered a cruel disappointment in her religious convictions. She was a strict adherent of the old-fashioned Presbyterian Kirk, and although she was wonderfully tolerant with other people and never interfered with their creeds and beliefs, she was unswerving herself, and jealously guarded the honour of her own kirk. Some few years before this visit of ours, there had come to New York a certain minister, straight from Scotland, and with a gospel guaranteed to guide all true Presbyterians direct to Heaven. This was “ Meester Hall,” and he started a small meeting-house in Second Avenue, with conventional chalked walls, extremely hard wooden benches, and certainly with no “ kist o' whistles ” (organ) or anything Popish and wicked of that sort ! Even the singing was just as it should be, with “ Meester Hall ” to give out tone and phrase, and the congregation following in the most approved style.

Alas for “ Meester Hall ”—success undid him ! His eloquence made his fame spread abroad, people from all quarters packed into his little meeting-house to hear his burning words, and finally the little building would not hold all his admirers. Funds came in readily, and preparations were made to erect the great new Presbyterian Church now standing in Fifth Avenue. McAllister, who was accustomed to the simplicity and lack of ostentation of the old kirk, began to have her doots, and at this time often pleaded with Grandmother for assurance, for, to her, Grandmother was infallible. She was comforted to some extent by being told that Mr. Hall, being a distinguished man and a great orator, was bound to progress as the years passed and his fame grew, and to adapt himself to new needs and ways. But McAllister shook her head dolefully, admitting that she might be prejudiced, but saying that she must still seek the Spirit and the Truth according to her own lights.

Alas ! "Meester Hall's" new kirk was opened, and McAllister, trying to judge fairly, went to the first meeting there. There were *red* cushions to sit on, and a *red* carpet on the floor ! The colour of the Woman of Babylon in the House of the Lord ! I remember stern old McAllister, whom nothing human could daunt, coming blindly home and weeping bitterly and unconsolably for hours. Grandmother tried untiringly to comfort her, but she never darkened the doors of the New Kirk again.

Back in the shabby little building where Mr. Hall's light had ceased to shine, a newly-awakened gospel-reader conducted the services according to the old fashion, and the faithful sat or knelt on hard wood, conducted their singing without the devilish distraction of a "kist o' whistles," prayed for the salvation of "Meester Hall" and comported themselves as they honestly believed that God Himself wished them to do.

During this New York visit, my sister returned to her old zeal for helping the outcasts of society. She recruited her friends to join her society of young ladies who met the prisoners returning from the Blackwood Islands, and as the East River Ferry came in, you might see dozens of lovely and earnest society girls taking ashamed-looking, ill-clad men under their protection, conducting them *en masse* to Moody and Sankey meetings and to the Y.M.C.A. hospitals and homes and street gatherings. They also provided them with a little money to make a fresh start in life, tried to find them jobs and sponsored them in every possible way. I know that many of these young men subsequently made good in various parts of America, and perhaps some of the readers of this book may be among them, and remember the tall, golden-haired Princess Isabel who was at the head of that society.

My sister prevailed upon me to attend one or two of the Y.M.C.A. meetings, and to go with her through Sing-Sing Prison, stopping at all the cell doors and talking for a few minutes with the men immured there. I must confess that I found remarkable intelligence and breeding hidden away there, and I experienced a feeling of exciting comradeship

and mutual respect which was rather foreign to the life of most young ladies of those days, closely guarded from the outside world as we always were.

Some of the prisoners seemed to us to have been punished rather severely for one single slip, perhaps under great temptation, and I am sure that many of them, particularly the younger ones, were the better for a little human understanding and sympathy, and tried sincerely to live a decent life after their release. There was a great deal of truth in the favourite saying of Father Tandy, the Catholic priest who was then in charge of the spiritual welfare of the prisoners, that there were many more real criminals walking down Fifth Avenue on the Sunday Church Parades than there were to be found in the blackest cells of Sing-Sing Prison.

CHAPTER XIV

1880

A Stuyvesant ghost. Those English funny names. An Earl's heir in difficulties. The tale of a chivalrous footman.

ALL ancient homesteads have their ghosts, and the Stuyvesant house where we were staying, though it was not possessed of enough antiquity to furnish a knight in armour, a black friar or a white lady, contented itself with a chef who had formerly been in the service of that Stuyvesant who was Governor of New York State. The chef was a Malay, and on one occasion he had followed with amorous intentions a very pretty young Irish kitchen-maid when she went early one morning to start the kitchen fire. When she resisted him, he strangled her and then hanged himself over the fireplace. To punish him for this misdeed, he was condemned to wander in ghostly form for ever in the neighbourhood of the kitchen, and there were several authentic reports of his ghost having been seen there.

On Thanksgiving Day we were going to have a great gathering of young acquaintances in the house, my brothers were bringing home friends from college, and great preparations for festivity were made. Quantities of chickens and game were killed and, in order to get the plucking done, the chefs had invited all our upstairs staff and stable servants to come down to the kitchen and help, providing them with a mighty supper at midnight as a reward. Even the ladies' maids were tempted to join the party by the joint attractions of the entertainment and the male society.

The supper was served on the stroke of twelve, and great hilarity ensued. Proceedings were at their noisiest when

suddenly one of the doors of the kitchen flew wide open, though no one was near it. Every sound of mirth stopped as if the Gorgon's head had turned the revellers into stone ; one sturdy young stableman uttered a horrible gasp of fear and hid his head in his hands with a convulsive movement ; a buxom young Irish laundry-girl who had recently come to us and who did not even know the story of the ghost (she would have scoffed at it even if she had) collapsed on to the floor near the open door ; and two great Newfoundland dogs which the grooms had taken down to enjoy the scraps stood up, backed shivering into a corner, and howled in a way which put the final touch of fear into all hearts. Those sitting near the door felt a deadly cold chill for a second, as if, said one man afterwards, a piece of ice had been passed near his cheek, then the door silently closed itself, and the revellers were left staring at each other's white faces, though only the girl and the stableman had actually seen the ghost pass through. There were hurried and hushed exclamations, the fainting girl was picked up, and the whole party scrambled from the kitchen, headed by the dogs, and leaving the meal in the midst. The laundry girl only recovered consciousness at intervals to scream and faint again, and died two days later. I cannot explain that incident, but offer the facts as I knew them.

At this time, we used to employ as an extra hand in the laundry when the boys were at home, an old Irishwoman known to everyone as “ The Captain's Lady ”—if she had any other name, she had long forgotten it. Her husband was a common but courageous Irishman who had won Captain's rank in the Civil War, but was afterwards degraded, and worked when he had to as an ordinary bricklayer. On election days, when his vote was worth paying for, he always came home and gave his unfortunate lady what she proudly called “ a good hiding ” ; on one such occasion she had to send for McAllister before she could venture out of the house, for so thorough had he been that he had torn every bit of her clothing to shreds with his beating, while she herself was black and blue and wounded all over. She boasted for days of each separate mark !



Old Patience and Little

The author with her coloured nurse, Patience, in whose company she was when she first met King Edward.

After spring cleaning that year, at which ceremony she had assisted, McAllister noticed that she had collected together nearly a hundred half-empty medicine bottles, which had been partly used in the house and then banished to cellars and corners, as such things always are. Thinking she was taking the bottles to sell, McAllister made no comment, till, some time later when one of the Captain's Lady's six children was present, he asked his mother whether, in punishment for some youthful indiscretion, she would “stop his dose,” and burst out into loud crying when she said she intended to do so. Idly, McAllister asked what medicine it was that received this unusual fondness, and it transpired that the old Irishwoman had mixed the contents of *all* the bottles she had found, storing the result in numbers of her husband's empty and unwashed beer-bottles, and doling out a tablespoonful daily to each of her infants, who were always the most rosy-cheeked and chubby children in the neighbourhood. She argued that “all medicine's good for some kind of ailing, and in that mixture there was something to meet all troubles and find its way right down to the place where it was most needed ; as for the childer, they liked it and it did them good, God be praised, as ye could see for yourself ! ”

Another old Irishwoman who rather amused us was a Mrs. Wheelan, who kept one of the home farms of the villa. She was a widow, but had not apparently been prejudiced by experience against the married state, and conceived an ardent passion for Grandmother's head coachman, a silent old Scot named McFarlane. Mrs. Wheelan found that gentle hints had no more effect than chipping granite with a hairpin, and she decided to write some letters to him. These letters were shown to McAllister by McFarlane. One of them ran—“ I have reason for knowing that someone else has designs on Mrs. Wheelan, the beautiful lady whom I believe you also admire. Take her, McFarlane ; she is a prize. If you don't hurry, someone else will come and snatch her away, and you will be sorry all your life ; she is good and ladylike in all respects, and in many ways even more than ladylike.” The letters were signed “a well-wisher,” but McFarlane still

remained taciturn, keeping his own counsel and also retaining his single blessedness.

We had a prolonged visit from Mrs. Stuyvesant, who was a most stately and kindly lady, with all the charm and presence of an *habituée* of the European Courts. She was averse to mixing with the newer “dollar-nobility” of New York, and most of her acquaintances were of the old Knickerbocker families, or from Europe. She brought with her on her visit Bishop Potter’s youngest daughter, who had married a member of the English Cholmondeley family whom she had first met a year previously when they were both guests at our house. Effie Potter was a very pretty girl, accustomed to getting her own way ; and while visiting us with Mrs. Stuyvesant, she took a fancy to a horse owned by a neighbouring farmer, and this was paid for by cheque by her husband. A day or two after the purchase, they left us ; and a few days later, the farmer arrived at our house in great excitement, waving a cheque and saying that the man who had given it him was a rogue and had no account with the bank mentioned. “Fancy a born gentleman, and one who had married a bishop’s daughter, swindling a poor farmer like that !” he shouted furiously. When things were talked over, it turned out that the young clerk at the bank who had said, in response to a remark of the farmer’s and before the cheque was actually presented, that they held no account in the name mentioned, had thought that the man the farmer spoke of spelt his name “Chamley,” judging from the phonetics ; the farmer himself hurried back and looked at the cheque but the writing was entirely illegible, and as he had only heard the name spoken, he too believed it to be Chamley. When the manager of the bank was referred to, *he* pronounced it Cholmondeley in four syllables as spelt, and was very angry with the English generally for “using names that a decent man can’t swaller !” A little later, when a friend of ours of the name of Marjoribanks went to that branch, the manager came out to see him and asked him if he also pronounced it Chamley ; and his ire was by no means abated when he was informed that it was pronounced “Marchbanks.”

One day during this stay in America, McAllister came

in great excitement to Grandmother and told her that they had engaged a young man to saw wood in the stables, and that his poor wife, a lovely girl of twenty, was ill in the gardener's cottage where they had charitably taken her in because her clothes were in rags and she was very near her confinement. They were both Scotch, and so the young woman was lodged comfortably with a nearby family while the man was given profitable employment under McFarlane. Later he admitted that he was no less than the heir elect of a famous and ancient Scottish earldom. He had married, he said, a simple farmer's daughter, and the old Earl had cut him off without the proverbial shilling ; in those days, all such cases drifted to America seeking fortunes, and the young people had come, too. After his baby had been safely born and he himself had repaired his penniless state somewhat, the family left us, and we heard that, a few years afterwards, he had succeeded to the earldom, so the story came to a right and proper end.

A short time before this, a young man had been recommended by the Swedish Ambassador to the care of our major-domo, and he had found him a place as a footman with a nearby American family of ancient Dutch lineage. The young man was particularly handsome, and he performed his duties in an exemplary manner ; and later we learned through our major-domo that he was a Count of a very old Swedish family, which had fallen on evil days financially. After some time, we were surprised to hear of him again in a very unexpected manner—the police applied to our major-domo for particulars of his character. He had, it seemed, been arrested for theft !

His master, it appeared, had married again, choosing a vivacious young wife very considerably his junior, and this flighty lady had found the handsome young footman more attractive than her old husband. One day, the old man went up unsuspiciously and knocked at her bedroom door while she was entertaining the handsome youth, but her quick wit did not desert her. She stuffed a handful of discarded jewellery into his pocket and hid him in her wardrobe, and then opened the door to her lord and master. When he came

in, he noted her disturbed appearance, and in explanation she said she had been frightened by hearing something moving in the wardrobe. The door was opened, the young man discovered, and the jewellery in his pocket provided an explanation of his presence ! He was duly tried for theft.

The fair lady was present at his trial, but except for approving audibly when his sentence was passed, she did not interfere further, and the victim preserved her secret with unflinching gallantry. He was duly convicted and sent to Sing-Sing, nobody but our major-domo knowing the real reason for this sudden “ theft ” by one whose behaviour formerly had always been above suspicion. The story filtered through the various servants' circles, as such things will, and finally came to us.

After his sentence ended, the young man went back to Sweden, and there he became famous as a business man and was in time able to carry once more his hereditary title without shame, for no one knew of his American experiences. I met him some years later, and when he was introduced I acted as if I had never seen him before, though I had often done so when he was in service in the United States. He kissed my hand with deep homage, and I noticed a certain wavering in his glance and a faint flush on his cheek. He would not, of course, have blushed nowadays ; such affairs, even without any effort to protect the name of the erring lady, bring honour with them now not blame !

CHAPTER XV

1880

Jerusiah Breeze—Quaker. The Gay Kingslands. The Princesses of the Enchanted Castle. An Astor charity concert. Fun on Staten Island. The man who knew the Hendersons. A Vanderbilt party.

A FEATURE of New York society at this time was the family that formed the social link between the Quakers and the other religious persuasions—that of the Washington Curtises. The last of that branch of direct descendants from the Washingtons, Jerry Curtis, had managed to run through what little was left him of the once considerable wealth of the family, and so had married a young Quaker beauty from Philadelphia, an only daughter with a splendid dowry. The mother was a widow, and had made a condition that she was to live at her daughter's house, remaining a Quaker in truth and faith herself but not preventing her daughter from conforming with such society rules as pleased her husband, even if they ran somewhat contrary to the strict letter of the Quaker law. Jerry was in love with the pretty daughter, and the dowry was a convenient adjunct, so the terms were accepted. A fine old house in New York was bought, and Jerusiah Breeze and her daughter came to that wicked town from correct Quaker Philadelphia.

A most up-to-date establishment was inaugurated, a staff of perfect servants engaged, and the regulation cards issued saying that Mrs. Washington Curtis was "at home." The servants had all been engaged on the condition that they should observe the Quaker style in addressing the old lady, speaking to her as "Jerusiah Breeze," and in the second person singular.

They entertained most liberally, but Jerusiah Breeze retired as soon as all the guests had assembled, after saying : “ You are welcome in my house, but I am prevented from partaking in your pastimes.” The old lady always said *my* house and *my* horses, pretending no illusions as to who paid for these things ; as for Jerry, he winced, but like the Lord High Executioner, swallowed the insult after all.

When Fanny Curtis went out driving, she was always accompanied by her mother, who, however, was taken back to the Curtis home when her daughter made any calls. There were very few correct Quaker families in New York then, and only to such did Jerusiah Breeze herself pay calls, almost always preferring to go to them on foot. If at any time anyone addressed her as Mrs. Breeze, she said, “ My name is Jerusiah Breeze, and that is sufficient for me as it is and without additions ; you will excuse me for telling you so.”

Another notable family were the “ Gay Bachelors of New York,” the Kingslands. The father was a widower, coveted by all the widows and old maids of the city, but well able to defend himself against their wiles. He was evidently of considerable age, but he did not look it, for his behaviour was youthful and sprightly to the last. It was said that he was one hundred and ten years old when he died, but he only laughed at efforts to discover his real age, and as official records then were very irregular, no one ever knew, except by comparison. Even when he did die, the persistent old gentleman would not leave his New York house, but was always appearing there and causing commotions and flusters which would have delighted him in life ! No one ever dared to enter the wing of the house which he used to occupy, for he was often heard moving about there, swearing and chuckling to himself as cheerily as ever.

He had when we were in New York three sons living, who were always called the Kingsland boys, apparently to distinguish them from their father, for they were all very well over forty, and loaded with money. The youngest, who looked not a day over thirty, was very good-looking and gay and distinguished. I often danced with him in those days,

when I was about seventeen. Only a short time ago—a few years, so far as I can remember—the oldest of the brothers died, leaving untold millions to his youngest brother, who then, at something between ninety and a hundred, had just married a twenty-year-old daughter of the Duke de Vendôme, a branch of the Orleans family !

Another great name in New York at that time was that of old Peter Cooper, commonly called the Father of New York. He gave libraries and arranged reading-rooms and homes for the friendless all over the city, using all his vast wealth for the benefit of the needy, but neither he nor any of his family attempted to appear in society. He had two daughters, one of whom married a Hewitt, another benefactor of humanity, who again had daughters who lived quietly and in retirement, spending all their time and most of their wealth for others. The old Cooper home in Levington Avenue was a centre for everything that could be called good, noble and elevated.

Grandmother never visited or accepted invitations in New York ; she only received twice a month, and it was considered a very great privilege to be sent one of the cards announcing that she was “at home.” A romantic glamour spread over our family in those days, and my sister and I were always known as the “Princesses of the Enchanted Castle.” When Mrs. John Jacob Astor gave a grand charity concert and I was prevailed upon to sing, the demands for tickets were so great that in a day and a half every ticket was sold.

Mrs. John Jacob was another of the genuine old stock of the States ; there had not then been any capricious marriages in the family, and it was of good blood on both sides. She was a great friend of the Coopers, and old Father Peter Cooper admired her very much indeed.

If any of my readers remember the New York of fifty years ago, they will remember that concert. It was the grand event of the season, and the more notable because it was in Lent, thus offering an occasion for the display of dresses yet fresh after the short season, and which otherwise would have been seen no more. Mrs. John Jacob wore a

black velvet with a white satin front, and declared that she had not been so dressed up for the last twenty years—which was more than likely, as she was known for her modest and quiet attire.

That was my first great public triumph. I have had two in my long life; the second was when I spoke candid monarchic truth before a gathering of four thousand anarchists—and was tremendously applauded and cheered. Of that I shall speak later.

The concert was a very great success, even for New York. I sang, “There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,” and then, “Tutte le feste al tempio,” from *Rigoletto*. Even that great house seemed to shake and reverberate with the clapping, and I was presented with such a profusion of bouquets that our carriage had to make two journeys to convey them home. Never in my life have I seen such a wonderland of flowers as the Astor house presented; even the banisters of the staircases were garlanded with magnificent roses, and one wondered that such masses and masses of flowers could possibly have been gathered anywhere in the world in the depths of winter.

In those days, when there had been a heavy snowstorm, everyone who had friends at Staten Island went there to visit them, and to indulge in an ancient pastime peculiar to the place. On moonlit evenings all the families were galloped round the Island in sleighs, to the cheery accompaniment of tinkling bells and happy shouts, stopping at a number of recognised inns where dancing was going on. The practice was to go from one to another, meeting friends—perhaps the same party over and over again, for there was no order of visits observed. Indeed, a large part of the fun was to race about the island in criss-cross fashion, and it was part of the game to display the greatest possible surprise each time one met a party one had seen previously in the evening.

One met all sorts of people, and everyone was on terms with everyone else on such occasions without the formality of long introductions. It was a regular free-and-easy old American amusement. There was, of course, some difference



Hansen & Weller, Copenhagen

Queen Louise of Denmark, known as "The Mother of Royal Europe."

observed between those who considered laager beer as a suitable refreshment, and the others who ordered champagne and biscuits served in a room where the laager-drinkers did not presume to enter ; but the dancing was for everyone, and very hilarious and animated it was.

We young people were allowed to accept an invitation from the Hendersons, a most distinguished family of Scottish ancestry, the head of the family being at that time director and chief shareholder in the Anchor Line. It was a very hospitable and pleasant family, and the lady of the house always declared that she was not really happy unless she saw more than twenty faces round her table—not such a difficult task as it sounds, for she rejoiced in a very large family.

After dinner, we found half a dozen sleighs all ready, and away we went, each sleigh in a different direction, to meet here and there as luck would have it later in the evening. In the third inn we visited, I was sitting out, rather tired, when a large lady came sidling towards the improvised wooden bench where I was sitting—a mere rough board laid between two chairs. Encouraged by a smile, she told me she was Irish—which I would have known anyway—and explained that her husband was the Justice at the Quarantine Station, and that she was rather slighted by the disregard of the other ladies, though she was, she said, of “the good ould Irish families that came over the Atlantic in a sailing vessel, before the rubbishy steam was ever invented to bring over all the disreputables of all the earth ! ” She told me about her property, her family and all sorts of other things, and was most amusing, though she intended to be most impressive and solemn.

Meanwhile, Isabel was dancing with an exquisitely-dressed young man of most distinguished appearance who had followed us from one stopping-place to another. He had not, of course, been introduced, as everything was so informal, but she accepted him in all good faith, and he was a splendid dancer. Also, he donned a new pair of white gloves before he came and asked her to dance with him, and that touched her heart !

He told Isabel that he knew the Hendersons well and

often called on them, and I believe she thought him to be a distinguished young diplomat. But when I asked one of our party who this handsome youth really was, I learned that he was the grocer's assistant ! Isabel was furious when I told her, and would not believe me. She accused me of wanting to flirt with the young man myself, for she often said about me that I had flirted with the doctor when I was born and would flirt with the undertaker when he put me in the coffin ! Later, another factor was added to the evidence, when the friend of her cavalier, having partaken rather too freely of the refreshments which were available, made a half-hearted effort to go downstairs in the ordinary way, and then gave it up, sat down, and slid from top to bottom, preserving the while a most dignified stare from above his perfectly-cut velvet jacket ! Our party returned home at five o'clock in the morning, through the keen, frosty air, and after taking an early breakfast and agreeing that we had had a splendid time, we all went to bed, dead tired.

A great event which had been arranged for mid-Lent was the official house-warming at the grand new Vanderbilt Palace in Fifth Avenue, the family vacating at this time the old home in Waverley Place, where the first Vanderbilt, the *ci-devant* ferryman, had laid the foundation of the family millions. The Vanderbilts had not then succeeded in entering the best society ; indeed, Mrs. Stuyvesant asserted that it was more difficult to enter the New York Upper Ten than to be presented at Court in England, where the American Minister was obliged to present anyone who would vote for his party.

To this great social event we had, of course, the most pressing invitations, brought personally after the exchange of cartloads of visiting-cards. Grandmother never accepted such invitations, her excuse being that she could not accept one without having to accept all or risk giving offence. We young people wanted very much to go, especially since it was rumoured that Mrs. Vanderbilt would wear all the jewels purchased at an auction of the effects of the late Empress Eugenie, besides a great many others ! The flower

decorations alone were to cost \$200,000, and seven detectives, dressed up as gentlemen, were to watch Mrs. Vanderbilt's personal ornaments.

Mrs. Stuyvesant would not accept the invitation to be present, and we were at a loss for a chaperon. The Vanderbilts were most anxious that the “Princesses of the Enchanted Castle” should be present; and finally, it was arranged that Mrs. Stuyvesant's sister-in-law, the widowed Mrs. Van Reneselaer, should take us. Isabel wore white brocade, and I had a dress of plain white satin, trimmed with some exquisite Venetian point lace from the time of the Republic. Neither of us wore diamonds, although in America very young girls did so even then; we wore ropes of pearls.

Everything at the ball was glittering and magnificent—too much so, indeed, to harmonise with the rules of good taste. Several of the Upper Ten were there, but curiously enough no one wore jewellery beyond the simplest ornaments. It seemed that there was a tacit agreement to leave the supremacy of the hostess unquestioned, at least in that direction; and she looked rather like a gorgeous heathen idol, loaded with the jewel offerings of its votaries. She wore a crimson velvet, trimmed with a profusion of costly lace, and her dress certainly looked magnificent on her tall, rather spare figure. But her little, dark face with its *retroussé* nose looked rather as if it did not belong to the rest of the ensemble, but had just happened to be there!

The famous seven detectives were not perfectly tactful in the way they carried out their mission. They were far too much in evidence, and despite the lavish hospitality and the gorgeous decorations and perfect refreshments, everyone felt rather as though they were being silently accused of larceny on a grand scale. The year after that the engagement of the Vanderbilt girl to the Duke of Marlborough was announced, and the family's place in American society was finally and firmly established.

CHAPTER XVI

1880-81

Two losses. A yacht-trip round the world. Guests of the Viceroy of India. A narrow escape. Tragedy of washing-day.

AFTER this New York stay, we returned to Italy, for Grandmother's health had failed, and the doctors advised her to try the effect of a milder climate. The lease of our villa on Lake Como had not yet run out, so thither we went, though it was but a sad homecoming. A greater trial lay before us. Grandmother was as sweet and patient as ever, but she was dying, and one afternoon at the end of July she fell asleep like a tired child, and she was taken home to the Highlands to lie with her Clan at Braemar. The shock to us, although we had foreseen it for months, was terrible ; she had been for so many years our sole guardian and guide, and now that she was gone, we had no feeling of home or friendship left us.

We were still numbed by the loss, when, one week after Grandmother's funeral, we received a telegram from Heidelberg saying that my brother Claude was dead of pneumonia. We had not even heard that he was ill ! In his last term there, he had contracted a chill while boating, and had died in three days. The telegram came while I was staying with the family of the Duke of Chartres at Castle Ese. I was overwhelmed and confused ; even now, after so many years, I cannot write or think about that time without experiencing afresh the pang and numbness of bereavement. I was only seventeen, and my life before had been so carefree and joyous ; I could hardly believe the truth.

My sister returned at once from some acquaintances whom she had been visiting, and she and Lady Isabel,

Grandmother's friend and companion, and Marie d'Orleans, who had been my friend from convent times, comforted and helped me through those dark days. It was decided that my sister and I should join the party of the Duke of Montpensier, heir to the throne of France and our relation through my paternal grandmother, on a yacht-trip round the world, so that our minds might be distracted from our sudden and terrible losses.

The whole first part of that lovely journey left no impression on me. I was still dazed and afraid, and had to be taken care of by my sister and Lady Isabel, who had accompanied us as chaperone. Mademoiselle de l'Edailler had gone to stay with my grand-aunt, Princess Jeanne d'Orleans de la Graviere, at Liège, and dear old McAllister, after accompanying Grandmother to her last resting-place in the Highlands, died almost at once of a broken heart. We passed the flower-set Sandwich Islands, crossed the Pacific and left Hong Kong behind us, but to me existence had become a fatiguing and confusing dream.

Not until we reached Calcutta did my interests even begin to reawaken. There we stayed with our old friend, Lord Dufferin, who had been appointed Viceroy of India. The Residency will always be for me a place of grateful memories. Hamish Cunningham was there, in the capacity of Lord Dufferin's secretary, and his affectionate kindness and the care and thoughtfulness of the Viceroy and his lady, who encouraged me to talk about Grandmother to my heart's content, warmed again my frozen soul. I was persuaded to leave off my mourning, for it was over a year since our sad losses, and I found my interest in the world about me reviving again.

A great ball was held at the Residency in our honour, and everyone distinguished and noble among Calcutta and district society attended. The Maharajah of Cooch Behar was introduced to me, and became a great friend. He had been at Oxford, and had acquired all the culture and refinement of a perfect Western gentleman while still retaining all the fascination of the East.

During the ball, as I was rather tired, Hamish Cunningham took me out to the cool of a great veranda, where we could talk undisturbed about mutual childhood memories. In the middle of a sentence, I saw his face turn suddenly pale, I heard a curious rustling in the leaves overhead, and Hamish jumped at me suddenly, took me round the waist, and before I could open my mouth, hurled me across the veranda to the door of an adjoining room. Simultaneously, there was a crackle of twigs where we had been sitting, and something like a long streak of light gleamed and smote through the foliage, over our seat and away into the darkness beneath.

A python had been attracted by the music of the dance, and had come to enjoy it—they are always amenable to the influence of music. Seeing us just below, it attempted to strike us, but Hamish, by his unceremonious action, saved us both. The dancing stopped with dramatic suddenness, and a hue-and-cry was set up, the fifteen-foot reptile being finally cornered and killed by native servants.

India as a whole did not impress me with the enthusiasm that so many travellers feel for it—or perhaps think it their duty to feel ! I disliked the place ; it impressed me with a haunting dread of meeting some new and deadly monster, seeking my life. I remember once, when I found a scorpion under my pillow, staring in terrible affright at the huge black, hairy spider, almost losing myself in the beady gleam of its horrible, witch-like eyes, and thereafter searching every corner of my room with absolute dread each time I entered it.

We were invited to stay at Birkenhead, the country house of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, and I was surprised to find it a perfect English home, with just a few unavoidable Oriental touches. That was near Darjeeling, set in the midst of a park of a splendour which I have never seen equalled.

The Himalayas were impressive, but I hated them. The Towers of Silence in Bombay I found interesting, but so much has been said about them by other travellers, who have described in detail the Parsee custom of exposing their

dead to the vultures there, that I can add but little that is novel or exciting. I was glad when we left India and made our way to Cairo.

There we stayed some time, arranging for a caravan to take us up the Nile. There were no steamers there then, and we had to obtain camels, boats, porters, mules and all sorts of camping gear. Meanwhile, some of our party had an invitation to lunch with Princess Emiriel, who lived in true Oriental style when she was at home, but in Paris was a leader of society and one of the most advantageous clients of the fashion *salons*. The Princess dwelt in a fortress outside the Royal palace, and from the road we saw nothing but a high, dark wall, grim and forbidding. Once the carven portals had been thrown back, however, a magic vista opened of waving palms, fountains playing from marble basins, shady walks and a profusion of flowers of both hemispheres and all seasons. In particular, there were masses of roses—roses growing and trailing everywhere, so that the air was heavy and drowsy with their scent.

We passed through many rooms, sparsely furnished, but with incredibly rich and costly Oriental hangings worked with exquisite gold and silver embroidery. Finally, we were led into a wide and lofty apartment where ancient Eastern splendour and modern French refinement vied with one another. The Princess, who was dressed in the correct Oriental trousers and silken robes, received us joyously, for her visitors from the West were naturally few.

Luncheon was served on the floor. We reclined on gold-embroidered silken cushions around a cloth marvelously worked with flowers in gold and silver thread, and each napkin was a perfect work of art. Thirty-seven courses were served, each according to Eastern taste, only the interiors of animals being prepared, and the manner of their presentation was so atrocious that no Western palate could tackle them. One course, I remember, consisted of raw cucumbers, sliced in milk and cinnamon, and served with the minced raw liver of some unknown fish, tremendously spiced. The drinks were just a multitude of various sherberts, and a profusion of sweetmeats appeared at

intervals, though they were of somewhat dubious composition.

Next day, we started up the Nile. In spite of our lengthy and elaborate preparations, our camping arrangements were not at all successful. We were especially annoyed by a plague of stinging beetles and other flying abominations that no veils could exclude, not to mention ants and fleas which thrived on insecticides, of which latter we used over a hundredweight during the trip.

The first incident of note occurred when we were passing a low, muddy strip of land, separated from the main shore by a branch of the river. We saw as we approached, a number of old, half-naked black women yelling and screaming and waving their arms wildly. It appeared that they were conducting the communal washing, and that one of their number, having carelessly stood a little separate from the rest, had been seized and dragged under by one of the crocodiles with which the river abounded. There were still some sluggish swirls of red in the water when we arrived.

After having lamented a little more, the old women went calmly on with their washing. One of them observed that the occurrence was a fortunate one for the husband of the lost lady, as he was a poor man, and would now be saved the expenses of a funeral. She herself, however, worked as close to the shore and as near to her companions as possible ; perhaps her own husband was a richer man than the new widower ! As we went on our way, the old hags broke out again into a cheery song.

The Luxor of those days, absolutely untouched by vulgar tourists and the home only of various parties of investigators, we found interesting, though mummy-finding and the deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphics had not then taken much hold of the public imagination, and Egyptologists had to do what they could without official support.

Our guides told us an interesting local belief as we passed what has since been called the Valley of the Kings. It was near here that Cleopatra, assisted by a Prince of the ancient and rightful line of Pharaohs, violated the crypt of a King

of the Rameses dynasty, and sacrilegiously stole the greatest sapphire known to the world, as well as many other priestly gems, including the famous stones which she dissolved in vinegar and drank at Mark Antony's feast.

The evil work was revenged, however, when the spirit guardian of the tomb, acting in the shape of a great bat, caused the dire misfortunes which resulted in the downfall and death of Cleopatra ; while the guilty Prince who had been seduced by “ Lovely Egypt's ” beauty, was captured by the priests, led by the ghostly bat, and buried alive. This story has been used, I believe, as the basis of a recent novel in English by Rider Haggard.

We came to Mervè, the beautiful isle in the middle of the river, after passing the last cataract. It is like an oasis in a desert of waters ; cool fountains play, the coarse shore camel-grass changes to natural lawns around little crystal ponds where the lovely water-lilies and wind-flowers of the Nile grow under lofty palms, and the acacia, with its sweet yellow blossom, crowd, right to the edges of the water.

There we met another party, which included the famous Irish poet, Aubrey de Vere, and we joined them at once. That evening, refreshed after our days of desert travel, we had recitations and songs. I had my harp with me—in those days it was my constant friend and companion—and I was asked to sing. I chose : “ There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,” which seemed appropriate, and then, as an encore, “ Rememberest thou Gurre ? ” by Hans Andersen. Memories of that other evening at Gurre Castle, when I had sung those words, came poignantly back to me then in the midst of the Egyptian sands.

My choice of a second song caused a little surprise at first to those unacquainted with the theme, and to explain, I find it convenient to translate into English, as well as I can, two of the stanzas.

“ Where the Nile spreads over Egypt's earth
 Cooling Africa's burning sand,
 Two swallows were meeting ; they came from the North
 And they spoke of Denmark-land.

Rememberest thou Solund, the beautiful isle
Where the wild cushat doth tarry,
And the fragrant yew ; where the billows smile—
Rememberest thou Gurre ? ”

The association of ideas was much appreciated, and Aubrey de Vere wrote some very flattering lines in my autograph album. Alas ! that and many other interesting anthologies and papers were lost in a catastrophic fire several years ago.

CHAPTER XVII

1881

Luncheon with Abdul the Damned. A new story of Potiphar.
Entry to the Holy Land. The "Princes of the West" enter
Jerusalem.

ON our return journey we stayed a few days at Cairo, and then went straight on to Constantinople. We were invited to a luncheon at the Sultan's Palace with Abdul Hamid, who afterwards was forced to flee from his country and live in exile because of his admiration of Western customs, and who is better known in Europe under his nickname of Abdul the Damned.

The Palace gardens were magnificent with all sorts of exotic flowers and delicate marble tracery ; and the Palace itself was gorgeous beyond description, so that the effect was absolutely overwhelming. Abdul Hamid himself was possessed of the courtesy and dignity of a true monarch, and although he was more than plain and was already well on in years, his conversation and actions were marked by a royal grace. He received us with such kindness that we felt at home at once, even in that place of ponderous and barbaric magnificence. His manner reminded me strongly of that of the Emperor of Austria, Franz Josef ; there was nothing studied or formal, and our comfort was his first consideration throughout our stay.

Contrary to our experience in the desert, we found that everything here was arranged in perfect Western style. We were not expected to recline to our meal, but sat in Chippendale chairs at a beautiful table, the dishes were prepared by French *grands chefs*, and rare old wines were freely provided. The Sultan and his ministers did not take

wine, as it is against Eastern religion to do so ; but they abstained in a manner which did not make us feel in the very least embarrassed in our own indulgence.

The conversation was in French, which His Majesty spoke perfectly, and we talked of art, travel and poetry. This led naturally to a mention of the poetic word-pictures of the Koran, and the Sultan was delighted to discover that I was familiar with that wonderful book, and with the beautiful emotional poetry of El Shukuo and Zalitsa. He talked animatedly to me for some time, and told me of a passage in the Pentateuch which the followers of Mohammed declare to have been erroneously rendered by the translators of the writings of Moses, who is, of course, greatly reverenced by the Mohammedans.

The disagreement concerns the famous story of Potiphar's wife. This lady, so says the Koran, was a young and beautiful Egyptian girl, while Potiphar himself was old and uninteresting. When the handsome young Hebrew youth was brought into Pharaoh's officer's household, the inevitable happened. Potiphar, hearing how things were progressing from a jealous handmaid who had tried unsuccessfully to captivate Joseph herself, found the lovers together and cast Joseph into prison, where he would certainly have been tortured to death, but for his opportune reading of Pharaoh's dreams.

After luncheon, we were conducted first of all through the wonderful picture galleries of the Palace, and then into that part of the gardens which is reserved for the Sultan's harem. There, as we passed along galleries draped with every variety of rich and exquisite hanging, we were constantly aware of the curious glances of almond-shaped eyes peeping from behind shaking curtains and embroideries, and of the whisper of stealthy feet moving circumspectly from our path. Once we heard a tiny silvery laugh, instantly subdued. It was like walking in a dream, and the sense of unreality did not leave me till I found myself again in my room at our hotel, and Emelie was touching my temples with eau-de-Cologne before I lay down for a little rest.

We heard later that in order to see the Imperial Treasury a special request should have been made to Tewfik Pasha, and as we had through ignorance omitted to make this request, we were not invited. For my part, I was glad of it. We had seen such a galaxy of costly things in the Imperial Palace, such wonderful goldsmith's work and such a profusion of jewelled ornaments, that anything more would only have caused fatigue without adding at all to our impression of the artistic and the beautiful.

A special “ Firman ” from the Sultan himself was brought us next day by the authorities. This firman, which was a great and rarely accorded honour, gave us the right to pass everywhere without any question or permission from the local authorities, and to be received with princely honours anywhere in the Sultan's realms. Also, we were henceforth to be protected by a specially chosen Guard of Honour during our journey through the Moslem Empire.

When we arrived at Joppa, the promised bodyguard was drawn up, motionless and glittering, at the landing-place. The dozens of clamouring vendors of curiosities and seekers of alms attempted to surround us as we landed, but our guards, at a harsh word of command, galloped among the crowd, sending screaming Jews and wailing Arabs rolling in the dust together, tumbling men and women across the cobblestones in a scene of dire confusion. Speedy white camels, and horses of the noble Arab breed awaited us, and mules were fetched for our luggage. We went through the ancient town at a trot, our guard threatening with the flat of their swords all who attempted to delay us ; and, truth to tell, I thought little of either Joppa or its people.

Our first camp was very pleasant and peaceful. We were not troubled by insects, as we had been in Egypt, nor were there hyenas or jackals to howl about us. All the arrangements for our comfort had been perfectly made by the captain of our guard, whose head would have suffered the penalty of any complaint we had chosen to make.

Our next stop was at the foot of Mount Carmel, where

stood the villa of Lady Esther Stanhope, “the Western prophet of the East,” as she was generally called. Lamartine, in his book of travel in the Holy Land, has effectively described a visit he made to this remarkable woman, who was always dressed in white robes, and played the prophet's part to perfection. Now, her wonderful villa and exquisite garden are deserted, and the spot is marked only by a few ruins, and a pathless wilderness of glorious roses. Even her name is almost forgotten.

We skirted Mount Lebanon, crowned by its famous cedars, and found ourselves in the hilly country that surrounds the Holy City. At sight of that quiet landscape, Byron's beautiful “Hebrew Melodies” came vividly to my mind.

“The wild gazelle on Judah's Hill
Exultingly may bound,
And drink from all the Holy wells
That gush from sacred ground. . . .”

Here, every yard of earth has been made holy by the footsteps of the gentle Saviour of the World. As we went slowly onwards, it seemed that the Scriptures were unrolling before our very eyes in a series of living pictures. There lay the little smiling Lake of Gennesaret, shaded by its dark sycamores, and over against us in the clear afternoon light was a clustering village—Nazareth. Had that wonderful figure in the white robes and with the halo of ineffable calm about His brow come suddenly down the hill-side to bless us, I think we should have kneeled before Him with ecstasy but without surprise.

Towards evening we saw a bright line of roof-tops on a shining elevation before us. By a mutual impulse, and in a single moment, we had all dismounted from our camels and horses, and knelt there together on the bare brown earth. “Jerusalem!” “The Holy City!” was exclaimed in all tongues, and homage was paid to it by the supporters of all the various creeds. It was an impressive moment, and we all felt it very deeply. After a minute or two, we quietly remounted and continued on our way.

The sun was just sinking when we reached the Oaken

Valves, as the Joppa Gate was called in ancient times. We passed slowly through, into a street where the habitual marketing was still going on, but buyers and sellers alike were jostled unceremoniously aside to make way for the Princes of the West, who rode into Jerusalem with the Sultan's firman. Those of the crowd who had not time to get away on their feet were flung head over heels into the gutter by our fierce escort ; pandemonium ensued, with old women trying to save their oranges and figs, Arabs clutching skin bottles of rare wine, and spitting curses, Jewish traders screaming, and even a dignified old Rabbi roughly shouldered into the gutter. There was a great deal of noise, but no one was hurt, and our camels lifted their feet daintily over the prostrate figures.

Some of our party were to lodge at the Cara Smyrna, the only available hotel then in Jerusalem, and the rest were to stay at the Cistercian Brothers Convent. I found there a letter that I had been dreaming of for many days. It was from my beloved childhood friend, the Duke of Clarence, and recalled the vow we had made in far-off Denmark years ago, that we should trace Eric Ejegod's steps through the Holy Land whenever occasion was given us. I needed no reminder ; that promise was kept fresh for ever in my heart.

During that stay, I went along the Via Dolorosa, the road sanctified by our Saviour as he carried the Cross to the little hill from whence it was to shine out for ever across the troubled world. In those days, one went to that holy place with a simple heart, offering devotion and unquestioning faith as a humble sacrifice to the Son of Man, who showed us, so many years ago, the way that road should be trod. Our only hesitations then were at the places where He stopped in fatigue, and where we who followed paused to meditate and pray.

There were then but few disputes and unseemly squabbles between those who were chosen to uphold the Christian Faith. There were no bill-posters among the clergy, no cheap advertisements of this or that religious sect. There were no learned wranglings as to the exact spot in the Garden of Gethsemane where the Disciples slept or where He stood in

His Agony, for the time was better used in prayer and quiet thanksgiving. The devotion and conviction that showed the Crusaders how to lay down their lives for their Faith also guided their descendants to kneel in quietness and humility when they came upon holy ground.

CHAPTER XVIII

1881

A vision at Bodil's grave. Meeting with Lot's wife. A bazaar in Bagdad. Attending a Kremlin Coronation.

IN order to go out secretly to the Valley of Josaphit, where Eric Ejegod's saintly Queen Bodil lay buried, I had to seek a time when the remainder of our party were resting at their hotel. We had been to the Valley previously during our visit, but no one had seemed to know exactly where the grave was situated ; I had, however, discovered for myself a plan showing the precise spot, and, asking Lady Isabel to accompany me and hiring a dragoman to lead us, I went forth one afternoon on my private pilgrimage.

The place is surrounded by a circle of low, thick cypresses and sycamores, and Lady Isabel opened a comfortable camp-stool and sat down placidly outside while I parted the branches and entered reverently the tiny natural enclosure, and knelt down on the short, fresh grass within. Afterwards I seated myself on the ground, and saw again in spirit the whispering lindens of the northland, and the Duke of Clarence talking earnestly to me about this very spot where his holy ancestor lay.

Suddenly, the branches opened, and a tall, graceful youth stepped forth, sat down at my side and took my hand. It was Albert Victor himself. Everything seemed so natural that I did not even wonder how he had come there so opportunely. Everything was as it should have been. We talked in low voices of those wonderful hours in Denmark, and discussed the exact place where we should

erect our monument to the memory of King Eric and his Consort.

Suddenly I heard Lady Isabel's voice calling me. I woke with a start, and for a moment, so vivid had been my dream, looked wonderingly around me for my companion. I had been there so long and remained so quiet that she had thought it wise to see if I was safe.

Next day we set out for Bethlehem. We went out through the Joppa Gate, past the Tower of David, by the Pool of Gihon and the Valley of Hinnon, skirting the Lion Wall. Passing through the Plain of Rephaim, where David surprised the Philistines, we were told by our guide that it was there that Absalom was caught in his flight by his long golden hair, and smitten ere he could free himself by a passing soldier, who did not know the huge ransom that might have been extorted by selling his princely captive. Nearing Bethlehem we passed numbers of women with pitchers on their heads going down to the wells, just as Rebecca—and later the woman with the seven husbands—must have done.

In the little square khan to our left the Divine Presence was born ; out there on the Hill of Elias the bearded sheepherds saw the heavens open, and heard angelic voices proclaim the coming of the Prince of Peace. I think no atheist could still deny the reality of God and the divinity of Christ after riding through these holy places, for they rise up before the traveller with the awful simplicity and conviction of the silent witnesses of God.

After leaving Jerusalem, we proceeded along the Jordan towards the Dead Sea. Skirting the edge of that withered and dreadful country where once stood the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, we came to the limestone pillar which legend says is all that remains of Lot's disobedient wife. If the lady was really that size, she must have been a very difficult individual to manage !

The next interesting place of call for us was Bagdad. No other city of the Near East has preserved its ancient Oriental character and charm so perfectly as this jewelled home of Sultans, whose cupolas and minarets make a

picture more wonderful than any scene of the imagination. We were brought by our Royal escort to Ab al Carmet's great bazaar—the finest in the whole city, covering as it does many acres of ground with its ornamentally-roofed buildings.

We were offered coffee, sherbets, ices and sweetmeats ; exquisite divans were brought for our repose by hordes of eager slaves ; crimson and gold carpets were spread beneath our feet as we advanced from place to place ; and hookahs of perfumed amber and incredible length were produced for the delectation of the male members of our party. The enormous bazaar was full of bargaining customers when we arrived, but our guards, in their usual unceremonious manner, kicked and belaboured these poor people till one and all had been hurled forth from the great gates, where, apparently quite used and resigned to such treatment, they crowded as near as they dared, trying to peep through the crevices of the hanging rugs and embroideries that sheltered us, so as to get a glimpse of the famous Princes of the West. I asked whether they would not resent such treatment from the bazaar-keepers, but was told that it was a great advertisement ; as soon as we had left, the place would be thronged with customers who wanted also to discover what we had bought !

After these preliminaries, and the passing of hundreds of extravagant compliments, wonderful Eastern wares were offered us, and we invariably replied offering about a third of the price asked for anything we desired. Long arguments followed, in which rich old Ben Zaxdy declared himself a poor man and a slave, but finally sold the things to us quite gladly, and no doubt at several hundred per cent profit !

That bazaar had been in the possession of his family for hundreds of years—in fact, as far back as Bagdad history goes, and that is much farther than our own Western history can trace. It still exists, and some of its products are offered in the great sale-rooms of London, Milan, and I believe of many other cities ; while the grandson of the old salesman who entertained us still presents himself regularly

here at my villa, offering me “ salaams from his ancestors ” and displaying for sale some of the finest carpets and metal-work of the gorgeous East.

Shortly after this we concluded our world tour, returning by way of Marseilles to Paris, where our depleted wardrobes received attention, and where our party dispersed. The Duke of Montpensier, by virtue of his right to the throne of France, received at this time a special invitation to the Coronation of the Tsar Alexander of Russia, which was shortly to take place in Moscow, at the Kremlin. I was asked to accompany his party thither, partly because the Tsarina, who was one of the Danish princesses, desired to see me again, and partly because the Montpensier family had developed a deep affection for me which is not always to be found among relations !

We travelled by special train to the Russian frontier, where we were met by the Russian Imperial special train, as the railroads there were built on a wider gauge than those of the rest of Europe at that time. The journey was long and rather fatiguing, for railways then were not nearly so comfortable—or so safe—as they have since become !

The great distinction shown to the French Royal party on the occasion of this visit was displayed in order to show that no ill-feeling was still existent in the House of Romanoff for the very slighting way in which the Tsar had been treated when he was invited officially to Fontainebleau in 1830. When the Russian Royal party arrived, they discovered that Louis XVIII's Marshal of Ceremonies had been so tactless as to allot all the most sumptuous of the palace apartments to the guests of the House of Orleans, while the suite assigned to the Russian Emperor and his party was in a side wing, rather ruinous and very poorly furnished. The Emperor left on the following day, but at the time of our visit to Moscow, the slight had been erased from the Imperial mind.

As soon as we arrived, the Duke of Montpensier was received by the Tsar, while the Tsarina's Mistress of the Ceremonies put herself at the disposal of the Duchess. Within an hour of our arrival I was invited to a private

audience with the Tsarina herself, but that was not an official matter, for Her Majesty wanted to talk with me about the old, happy days at Fredensborg and elsewhere, when we had been so much together.

We talked intimately of mutual friends, exchanging items of news and comment, and much of our time together was spent in those easy silences which only real friends can enjoy. I found her looking very tired and a little unhappy, and she told me that she was very fatigued by the innumerable preparations for the great Coronation ceremony. She was very glad to be able to speak in her native tongue again, after Court speech in French and tedious lessons in Russian.

She confided to me during our talk that she dearly hoped that her youngest brother, Prince Waldemar of Denmark, should marry my cousin and best friend, Marie de Chartres d'Orléans, and I said that it was a project dear also to the heart of Princess Alexandra of Wales. Later, of course, it was actually realised, and was a true love match on both sides. We discussed my sister Isabel's visit to the Château d'Ese, my own recent travels, and ever and again happenings and friends in Denmark. The one subject which she consciously avoided was the morrow's Coronation.

But the next day had to break at last, and all the nobility and pomp and power of Russia assembled in state at the wonderful Kremlin. It is hard to describe such overwhelming sumptuousness and magnificence, but I did not like it. The poor little Tsarina seemed to sink pitifully beneath the weight of her gorgeous robes, and the effect of the jewelled and pompous atmosphere all around. She had to preserve the statuesque dignity befitting an Empress for one hour and a half, while frowning Bishops of the Eastern Church, no less splendidly apparelled than the Royal pair, uttered their solemn blessings and lengthy exhortations, and endless lines of nobles paid their homage and passed on their way. Alas for my beloved little Danish Princess ! Bravely as she bore her burden of historic robes that day, her tender, loving and noble heart was to know greater oppressions ere long ; sorrow and tragedy lurked in waiting already among the shadows behind that brilliant, gem-set throne. I cannot

dwell on that time any more—such a terrible and shadowy valley lies between.

For several days after the ceremony, we continued to enjoy the unparalleled and lavish hospitality of the Russian Imperial House, and visited some of the neighbouring aristocracy, and then we returned to Paris.

CHAPTER XIX

1882

Shopping in Paris. Back to Fredensborg. A ball at the Palace.
The last of the summer festivities.

I WAS in need of very considerable additions to my wardrobe, as I had been unable to buy many of the things I wanted during the short stay in Paris which preceded our Moscow visit. For weeks after our return, I went busily from shop to shop, meeting numbers of acquaintances, for Paris was then full of people from all parts of the world, especially Americans.

One of the first people I met was Cassy Hamilton, who was over on her honeymoon trip. My sister came from Castle Ese, where she had been staying, and spent some time with me at the house of a Swedish lady, Baroness de Brahr. In the last week of August, I left Paris for Denmark, where I had to fulfil a number of invitations, ending with the Vivians, who were then at the Embassy, and had taken a villa at Elsinore.

In September, kings and queens from all over the world began to gather at Fredensborg Castle, and as that is only a short drive from Elsinore, we were almost daily at the Palace, too. Queen Alexandra arrived with all her daughters and accompanied by Albert Victor ; there followed the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia ; and on the seventh of September, the birthday of Queen Louise of Denmark, everyone attended a great family gathering, the Duchess of Mecklenberg-Strelitz and her daughter coming for the occasion, as did also the Grand Duke Michael and the Grand Duchess Anastasia.

During the morning we drove over from Elsinore and,

happening to stop at a shop on the way, we noticed a carriage drawn up there with a coachman in charge in plain livery, and an elderly servant in very correct black emerged from the shop, accompanied by a slender young lady, quietly dressed in a plain walking frock. It was the Empress of All the Russias. She explained that she had taken a plain coach from Fredensborg, and was making a few purchases for herself, for the pleasure of going about unnoticed and unheralded among the scenes of her youth, as a little relief from the pomp of her Royal state. She smilingly asked us to go on, and she would follow, saying that the horses then at her disposal could hardly match themselves with Lord Vivian's famous blacks, which were already chafing at their bits at the delay.

That day at Fredensborg is a delicious memory. It was spent strictly *en famille*, and etiquette was laid aside. In the evening the whole of the great park was brilliantly illuminated with coloured lamps hung among the trees and set about the lawns, and a wonderful firework display was given. The band of the Royal Guard played in the grand garden *salon*, and joyous dancing went on. The people were allowed into the park up to a certain point where a wire had been run about the Palace environs, and it was made known that the Tsar and Tsarina would appear on the balcony to receive the homage of the vast crowds that gathered below. It was a unique occasion, and the Danish nation fully appreciated it.

On the balcony there appeared a slender figure, arrayed in pale pink satin, with a demi-train trimmed with priceless lace, and adorned with a simple rope of pearls. Scattered cheers suddenly swelled and rose like a storm on the sea till the great square building seemed to rock and shake at their endless reverberations. Like a rose swayed by a passing breeze, the graceful figure bowed an acknowledgement of that great welcome, and Princess Alexandra, for it was she, returned blushing with pleasure into the *salon* again.

I sat out for some little time with the Duke of Clarence and I told him about my vision at Bodil's grave. He was



Fredensborg Palace from the Courtyard and (below) from the gardens.

intensely interested, and said that, at that exact moment, he had been sitting in his study at Sandringham musing about the grave, thinking of me, and wondering where we should erect our monument to King Eric.

A few days later I was invited to an intimate luncheon at the villa of Princess Augusta of Hesse, Queen Louise's sister. This lady had married a Swedish Baron, Blixen Finecke, one of the handsomest men of his day. He was an officer in the Swedish Guard, and of course the marriage was considered a mésalliance, and was very strongly opposed by the Royal House. Love, however, can laugh at kings as well as at locksmiths, and the Princess married the man of her choice, and was very happy with him.

She had one son, an only child, who was of course first cousin to Princess Alexandra and to the Tsar, as well as to King George of Greece. This son married a Swedish lady of good birth, again for love, though politics would have been glad to see him betrothed to a foreign Princess. His marriage was also ideally happy, though childless.

The Princess Augusta was very deaf, a trouble common to several members of the Royal family ; but she had a most accurate ear for music, and could appreciate and judge it in its minutest particulars, and could hear and enjoy the quietest playing. We had music after this little luncheon. Princess Alexandra, who was an expert pianist, played a symphony of Hadyn's, Princess Augusta herself gave a masterly execution of one of Beethoven's "Lieden," we had a few four-hand compositions, and then I was asked to sing. I chose Grusse's song, "Di Contane Stranee Terre," from *The Crusaders*. The Duke of Clarence sat watching me as I sang, and I saw in his wonderful eyes a look which I have only twice seen elsewhere—in Queen Alexandra's face when she was looking at King Edward, and in one other pair of eyes, years later. When I had finished singing, Princess Alexandra came up and kissed me, saying, "You are a darling !" It was a happy moment.

Some days later, King George and Queen Olga of Greece arrived with their children. We all went down to the Fort at Elsinore to receive them, and such a congregation of

kings and queens I have seldom seen. Prince Edward of Wales had arrived the previous day, but at his express desire he had been very quietly received.

The German Emperor was a notable absentee from the gathering, in view of the difficult situation then existent between the Scandinavian nations and Germany. He felt the slight very keenly, and years afterwards he had not forgotten it. He asked me then all sorts of questions about it, and his voice was instinct with regret. The Kaiser, despite the propaganda tales to the contrary, had always a noble and feeling heart, and time and again he suffered deeply at public slights which were put upon him, though his pride always forbade him letting any but his most intimate friends know the real state of his feelings.

A number of excursions and delightful picnics were taken in the country about Fredensborg, which is so beautiful that it is known as the Garden of the North. Our lessons in the Norse sagas and literature were continued again, and Albert Victor became more and more expert and learned, to the great delight of Princess Alexandra. As we were much together, we resumed our planning of King Eric's monument, and finally decided that its site should be somewhere in Northern Italy, on the King's road to Rome. Prince Albert himself had already decided on certain places where future pilgrims from the North should be received and entertained, and when he died he left considerable donations for the erection of such hostels.

That autumn was most beautiful and summer-like, so Queen Louise decided to give a ball *champêtre* to the various visiting Royal families, and to the neighbouring aristocracy. The great park was prepared, night was turned into day, and all the midsummer fairies were invited to participate. They seemed to have heard the request, and to bless the occasion with perfect summery weather and a pervading spirit of happiness. We knew it would be the very last grand occasion of the season, and we all made the most of it.

Princess Alexandra wore a very pale rose-coloured gown, and was as sweet as a summer dawn. She looked no older

than her two daughters who were present. Princess Louisa, in a dark, rich dress, looked the very opposite—seeming so stiff that it was a wonder she could dance at all. Princess Victoria looked tired and unwell, and retired early, but Princess Alexandra danced and danced. When she was dancing, no one could ever have suspected any lameness, for she was as light as a zephyr passing over a placid lake ; such a born charmer of hearts has never elsewhere existed.

Queen Louise looked lovely that evening. She had in her time been a peerless beauty, and even in extreme age she was still notable for her grace and regal dignity. The Crown Princess looked well, too, and was not so noticeably gaunt as usual. She was notable as the tallest, plainest and richest Royalty in all Europe, and usually, when she danced, one got the impression of a windmill in a strong gale : while even when, as now, she looked her best, it was conspicuous that she stood half a head taller than the finest of her cavaliers !

As for me, I danced and danced with Albert Victor, and the more we danced the happier we became, content to think only of the moment and to forget the dark to-morrow. What a dancer he was ! I doubt if I have met his equal among all the Royalty of Europe, and perhaps only once outside that charmed circle.

Two days later, a great farewell dinner was held at Fredensborg, and the gaiety of the ceremony was shadowed by the sadness of the approaching parting. There was no dancing that day ; and on the following morning the Royal departures commenced.

CHAPTER XX

1882-83

At the minor German Courts. With the Princess Adalbert. An embarrassing situation. A Hohenzollern in Sweden.

WHEN the party from Fredensborg broke up, my sister Isabel and I went to Munich, where it had been arranged that we should stay with the Princess Fugger von Donauroth. The months that followed were most enjoyable to us. We received introductions to all the little princely Courts at Munich, and there were then a great many of them, each more charming and amusing than the other.

There was no entertainment at the Royal Court. King Ludwig II of Bavaria (son of Ludwig I, whose morganatic wife Jean Gilbert alias Lola Montes, I have already mentioned) was a woman-hater, and never married. It was commonly said that he was in love with, and had been secretly affianced to, the lovely Elisabeth von Willelsbach, daughter of the Duke Max of Bavaria, and that when the political forces of the time compelled this beautiful girl to marry Franz Josef of Austria, King Louis flatly refused to consider any other matrimonial bonds.

At the time of which I am speaking, he lived in practical retirement at the "Residency" at Munich, which was one of the fantastic and incredibly costly palaces which he had erected all over his dominions, and which between them went pretty near to ruining the country. His mother, the widow of Ludwig I, also lived a most isolated and retired life, giving herself up to prayer and contemplation, and never receiving anyone.

This lack of gaiety was fully compensated by the per-

petual round of rejoicing which was kept up at the minor courts, where the various brothers and cousins of the King held sway. The eldest brother, Otto, was quite insane, and was kept in strict seclusion at Castle Nymfensberg, outside Munich. The most important remaining brother was Prince Louis, who with his Consort, the Archduchess Griselda, daughter of Franz Josef of Austria, entertained with lavish hospitality and regal splendour.

The Archduchess was not beautiful, but she was both graceful and dignified, and was also brilliantly clever. Her *salons* were delicious, and her novelties for diversion always exciting and seductive. She insisted that all the ladies who attended should appear in court-mantles, but at midnight, when the Prince's party retired (that is to say, *nominally* retired!) all the ladies went out to the dressing-rooms, discarded the mantles (which merely hung from the shoulders) and danced gaily on till dawn peeped through the casements. The Archduchess herself appeared at these times without her mantle like the rest, and joined as spontaneously in the gaiety as ever did her youngest guest.

In spite of her Austrian upbringing and the ceremonial tendency of her Hapsburg blood, the Archduchess Griselda took from her Willelsbach mother a remarkable ability to translate into action the German expression, “*geninthalich*”—I am afraid there is no exact rendering of this in English, and certainly no one can act the translation to such perfection as the Bavarian. The Bavarians—indeed, all the German officers of pre-war days—were the most perfect dancers in the world, so courteous, so precise, so perfectly graceful and with a carriage that no other nation can hope to equal.

Rivalling the *salons* of the Archduchess were the Court receptions of the Princess Adalbert. She was formerly a Spanish Infanta, and possessed the most weird figure I have ever seen. Her body down to the waist was abnormally large, but her legs were of such excessive shortness that she seemed only just to have avoided the etiquette saying of the Court of Ferdinand II—that the Queen of Spain has no legs! When Princess Adalbert and her sister, Queen Isabella

of Spain, attended a great procession on the occasion of Queen Isabella's visit to her sister's Court, an ordinary State carriage was provided to bear the two ladies. But when they endeavoured to enter the coach, it was discovered that the seating capacity was of insufficient width to accommodate the two Royal circumferences, and the Master of the Ceremonies had to provide another carriage as fast as he possibly could, to meet a most embarrassing situation. I do not know what happened to him afterwards !

Another piquant story is connected with the name of Princess Adalbert. When the Prince brought his Spanish bride back to Munich, and presented her to his father, Ludwig I of Bavaria, that old and outspoken monarch was astounded. He was, as I have said, a pressing and not altogether discreet admirer of female beauty, even when it took the form of a Scottish dean's daughter ; and it was whispered that he had approved his son's marriage with the Infanta because altogether exaggerated stories had been told him of the girl's wonderful beauty and grace, and he insisted on having pretty faces around him.

When the bride, therefore, made her first curtsey before him, the old King stared at her for a moment with darkening face, and then shouted in a rage, and before the whole assembled Court : “ *Is that* the young Spanish beauty you have been to fetch ? Well, she is *damned* ugly ! ”

Beautiful she can certainly never have been, but she was so very graceful and possessed of such infinite charm that her appearance was forgotten in a moment when one conversed with her, and only her clever and sympathetic mind and quick wit made themselves apparent.

Another Court which we visited and enjoyed was that of Prince Wilhelm Ludwig and his little Würtemberg Princess. Though they were unable to entertain quite so lavishly as some of the others, their circle was if anything more select, and at their exquisite *salons* one could feel both a homely sense of intimacy and the brightest spirit of gaiety.

One evening at a great reception at the Palace of Princess Adalbert, I noticed a very tall, slender young girl, talking

with the children of the Princess, who were each more good-looking than the other. This girl's dreamy blue eyes were constantly following me as I danced, and Princess Adalbert told me that she was the Princess Marie Victoria of Baden, who was engaged to be married to the Crown Prince of Sweden, and that she desired very much to be introduced to me.

We were introduced, on my suggestion, at once, and she addressed me in awkward Swedish, saying that she had heard so frequently of me and my visits at the Northern Courts, and that she particularly envied me my mastery of the Scandinavian languages. She asked shyly whether they were very hard to learn, and her blue eyes became almost tearful as she said that she found them very hard indeed.

I encouraged her as much as I could, telling her that she would very soon make progress, and that when she heard the language spoken all around her, she would easily become an adept. “Besides,” I added, “at the Swedish Court everyone speaks excellent French.”

“I know that,” she said sadly. “I would like to speak French too, but I want to master Swedish and to get to know and understand my people, and address them in their own tongue.”

Prince Gustaf, it seems, had told her that when he had met me years before in New York, I had spoken to him fluently in correct Swedish. That had pleased him very much, and the incident had remained in her mind, so that she decided to seek me out and ask me what was the talisman by whose aid I became so proficient a linguist! The Princess was anxious to know how my cousin, Marie de Chartres, who was by this time engaged to Prince Waldemar of Denmark and was, of course, studying hard at Danish, got on with her task. When I said that she progressed very well, Princess Victoria sighed, and said timidly that she feared at times that she would never succeed with her study of Swedish.

She was Queen of Sweden, later on, for many years, but she never became a true master of the language of her

new country, and never attained her ambition of understanding her people. During her first years in Sweden, she became very unpopular, because her Hohenzollern pride made her treat the native nobility with such overbearing harshness, and they naturally resented it. Like the Emperor of Germany and many another German, she was misunderstood, and where a little sympathy and an understanding heart might have resulted in a great and well-loved ruler, mutual intolerance led to sorrow and political disaster.

In later years, she relented from her proud coldness, but the change came too late to alter her unpopularity. She suffered then from a mysterious disease which the world's most famous doctors could neither understand nor cure, and partly in sympathy with her unhappy state, the Swedish aristocracy looked more kindly upon her, even if they did not feel much affection for her. Perhaps the most valuable quality a Queen can possess is that elusive one of winning hearts which the British and Danish Royal houses seem to inherit in their blood.

In those latter years, Queen Victoria of Sweden was sent by her doctors away from the cold North to the milder climate of Italy. She stayed frequently at Rome, and I often met her there. She was then, as always, most studious and kindly, an admirer of all that was beautiful and fine, but not always able to make her thoughts understood. I was very fond of her, and to me she gave her absolute confidence and affection. Throughout her reign I could always understand and appreciate the sterling qualities which underlay that haughty exterior; with me she was always unaffected and timidly sincere and lovable; and it was always a sorrow that so many of her own nobility should take offence at her mannerisms.

A most unhappy and typically German imprudence marred the very beginning of her life in Sweden, even before she came to the throne. Coming out from the Opera one night into the foyer, the First Gentleman-in-Waiting placed her cloak over the shoulders of Her Royal Highness, and then turned and performed the same courtesy for her Lady-in-Waiting, a beautiful girl belonging to one of the most

influential families in Sweden, who happened also to be his fiancée. This act should, of course, by the rules of Court etiquette, have been performed by the Second Gentleman-in-Waiting.

The young Princess, thinking that this breach of convention put her on a level with her own Lady-in-Waiting, and not then knowing the reason for it or caring later when she was told, turned sharply to the young Baron de Trolle, and said curtly: “ You are dismissed ! ” That incident spread a feeling of anger all over the country, and was the beginning of the dislike which only faded when the Queen was practically under sentence of death from her medical advisers.

After a very short stay, my sister left the gaieties of the Court again, and went to St. Joseph Stift, a home under the control of the Sacred Heart, where visitors who would subject themselves to certain religious rules and regulations were taught by those who had already taken the veil.

Isabel often told me at this time that she was tiring of the worldliness of Court life, and that she sought something deeper and more spiritual. These were the first hints of an impulse that grew upon her very much as she got older, and finally decided her fate.

A distant relation of our family, Robert de Montesquiou Sizeurac, visited us during this stay in Munich, and became a most agreeable member of our intimate little circle. He was considered notably handsome, and was very clever. Young as he was, he had already written several books of note, and in due time his name became continentally quite famous, thus adding one more to the already long list of literary representatives of the Montesquiou family.

CHAPTER XXI

1883-84

The Artists' Carnival at Munich. A haughty Princess. Defeat of a Morality Committee. At Court at Vienna. Viennese nights.

THE grand event of the season at Munich was always the Artists' Carnival, and the year we were there being the twenty-fifth anniversary, it was to be made a notable occasion. The Theatre Royal and the Hof Theatre were joined by a long and beautifully decorated passage, and all sorts of processions and masques and pageants were organised, the most meticulous care being taken to see that costumes were accurate and that everything was in perfect taste.

The whole of one side of the Hof Theatre gallery was thrown into one, the walls of the boxes were removed, and the lofty and spacious *salon* which resulted was put at the Royal disposal. The Princes of the Bavarian House sent out invitations to the principal aristocracy and the most distinguished foreigners in all Germany, and the forthcoming carnival monopolised the talk of the nation.

I have occasionally seen richer and more sumptuous gatherings, but never anything more picturesque and artistic, with that true and spontaneous touch of genius that only the theatre can provide. All the invitation cards were accompanied by a perfect little colour-sketch of the costume the guest was to wear; and that depended on the particular group to which he or she was to belong. All the dances were in costume, and they were most beautifully arranged—despite the great gathering, there was no crowding, for only so many tickets had been issued as would permit of absolute comfort, and only such people were invited as

could carry out the historical processions and scenes with dignity and grace.

Mary de Marigny had joined me at the villa of the Princess von Donauroth, and we two had received an invitation from the Princess Adalbert to join the Royal group, whose costumes ranged from the Crusading epoch to the time of Louis XIII. I wore a dress cut à la Princesse, made of white satin richly embroidered in front with seed pearls, and ornamented with a floral spray design of giant marguerites with topaz centres. The sleeves were very short and puffed, and a high Medici collar of old Venetian lace completed the toilet. A train of black velvet over nine feet long hung from between the shoulders from a large black tulle rosette, whose centre clasp was a single diamond.

Supper for the Royal party was served at one o'clock in the *grande salon* of the Hof Theatre, and every detail was an accurate copy of Crusading times. Plates, dishes and glasses of the actual period had been loaned by the National Museum and from various Royal deposits ; the illumination was from thick wax candles and flaring torches, the latter being secured in iron rings set at intervals around the walls, with underneath each torch a huge bronze brazier. When the torch burned out, it fell hissing and seething into the brazier, and was immediately replaced by another by a young page in Crusade costume. Seated at the long table, amid stern Templars, mail-clad knights, and stately ladies, you could dream yourself back again in the time of St. Louis of France, of Louis le Jeune, Cœur-de-Lion and Eleanor of Aquitaine—and they were there all four, in costume !

My cavalier was Alfonse of Bayren, only son of Prince Adalbert and the strange little Infanta who had met with such disapproval from Ludwig I. Alfonse, who was tall and blond, wore the costume of a cavalier of St. Louis. I was the tallest girl present, but he stood half a head above me, looking like an ancient Hero of the North ; and he was such a dancer ! We were unanimously selected by the Royal party as the couple who best represented the spirit of the Crusader times, and so were seated at the head of the interminable table. The Archduchess Griselda herself brought us

the first goblet of wine in a great golden loving-cup, for the etiquette as well as the costume of our pageant was to be observed.

The programme of music was most appropriately selected and played at intervals by the Theatre Royal orchestra and the Hof Capel. Proceedings went on in the gayest manner, and everyone was happy and excited. I danced the pavone with my cavalier, and afterwards the gavotte with the Duke of Würtemberg. In dancing, I had to support my train over my arm, and at each crossing in the gavotte my partner kissed my finger-tips—as knights kissed their ladies' hands when the next day, perhaps, might demand of them the sacrifice of life in the cause of the Cross. There were, of course, no modern dances, for in crusading days and even up to the time of Le Roi Soleil the knight touched only his lady's fingers, and the more recent compromising embraces were never practised!

One of the distinguished guests on that night was the Duke Max of Bavaria, whose Palace on the corner of the König Ludwig Strasse was an immense square building round which all sorts of legends and piquant stories had gathered. In its spacious courtyard, the lovely Princess Elisabeth, future Empress of Austria, took the first riding lessons that led in time to her becoming famous as the finest horsewoman in all Europe, and probably in the world.

A notable and frequent visitor to the Palace was Lord Rocksavage, another magnificent rider, but one who did not feel it incumbent on him to imitate the speech and habits of his own grooms, which custom was just becoming popular among English noblemen, and has remained with many of their families ever since. Lord Rock Savage was what is called a gentleman of the old school. He accompanied the Empress Elisabeth on her later tour of Ireland, where she captured the hearts of all the sons of Erin by her splendid horsemanship as well as by her notable beauty.

Her sister was the Princess of Thurn and Taxis. She married the handsome and wealthy Prince of that name, a brilliant cavalry officer, but she always treated him with the most cutting and haughty contempt, although it was by

Lanerettiget, Copenhagen

The Danish Royal Family, about 1882. Left to right : (seated) King Edward VII ; Queen Alexandra ; Empress of Russia with two Russian children ; Queen Louise of Denmark ; Alexander III of Russia ; Princess Maud (now Queen of Norway) ; King Christian IX of Denmark ; (standing) Crown Prince of Denmark (father of present King Christian X) ; Crown Princess of Denmark ; King George ; two Russian children ; the Duke of Clarence ; Nicholas of Russia (assassinated 1917) ; Princess Victoria ; Constantine of Greece. Queen Olga of Greece ; Christopher of Greece.



the aid of his family coffers that she kept up the Royal state upon which she always insisted. At banquets and dances at his palace, the funkeys had orders to throw wide both the folding doors when she entered, and they announced “ Her Royal Highness ! ” When her husband entered, however, only one door was opened to admit him, and he was announced as “ His Serene Highness ! ”

During this season at Munich, the *décolleté* of some of the society ladies became so exceedingly daring that it overstepped the mark permitted by Teutonic convention and good taste. The outraged feelings of the place found vent finally in the organisation of a Committee of Public Morality, numbering among its members some of the leaders of local society, and this committee took upon itself the onerous task of deciding whether evening frocks were all that they should be ! It attended a number of minor social gatherings, and certain ladies not actually of the Court circles were politely but firmly instructed to return home from various balls and mend both their manners and their frocks.

Finally, emboldened by lack of opposition, this committee decided to attend a great gathering held by the artillery officers for the benefit of Court society. Most of the ladies attending this ball heard of the threat beforehand, and chose for the evening something a little less daring than usual. A number of others who refused to be dictated to in the matter of their dress were ignominiously sent home by the waiting committee !

The jubilance of the latter was short-lived, however, for during the evening there arrived the beautiful Princess Elvira von Willelsbach, Prince Adalbert's daughter, and the spoilt baby of all German society. Her dress was cut deliberately very much lower than that of any of the ladies who had been sent home. But the self-appointed judges quailed before that Royal unconcern—and it is to be feared that they may even have had their heads turned by that blue-eyed witching smile ! At any rate, Her Royal Highness's entry was marked only by the homage which was her due ; and so many whispered comments were made on the fact that the members of the committee melted rapidly away

to *their* homes rather than remain to face the caustic smiles and raised eyebrows of the other guests. A sequel remains to be told. The rejected charmers set on foot such a crusade against the committee members that the subject of public morals has been taboo from that day to this in Munich ; several of the judges themselves were all but ruined by the feeling that was aroused against them, and one famous doctor who had been a prominent member entirely lost his practice and had to retire.

As the Carnival drew to its close, we were invited by the Princess Sekarsburg Rudolfstadt to spend a few weeks with her at Vienna, to take part in the last of the great Court festivities there. My sister preferred to remain at St. Joseph Stift, where she had gone to stay with a friend of our convent days who had already taken the veil ; but I took advantage of the invitation, travelling with dear old Lady Isabel, who still kept staunchly by me, though she was now getting very old and frail.

I was presented to Franz Josef and his Empress on the first possible occasion by my hostess, and as I stepped towards the throne to make my conventional deep curtsey, the Empress, contrary to all the practices of etiquette, rose suddenly from her throne, came down and met me half way, and embraced me, exclaiming : “ Oh, I have heard so much of you already ! I know you can ride splendidly ; and you love Hesse, too, don't you ! ” Occasionally, Her Majesty's spontaneous good nature and impulsive spirit made her commit such breaches of Court convention ; and no one ever commented upon them, not even Franz Josef himself, though in everything else he was, as is well known, an absolute martinet and permitted no deviation from the letter of the “ *ancien régime* ” which he so admired and demanded.

I was present at the last ball at the Hofburg that season, and it was a most brilliant and wonderful entertainment. The dancing went on till the following morning, and the place was a maze of brilliant military and diplomatic uniforms and exquisite gowns. The officers in particular were wonderful dancers, and flitted about like gay butterflies,

paying attention to and flirting openly with all the pretty girls who would permit such obvious admiration.

I noticed a number of pale, quiet ladies sitting in obscure corners in confidential conversation with one another. Very occasionally one of the officers went up to such a group and led one of these hesitant shadows out into the brilliantly-lighted room for a perfunctory dance, after which the lady was hurried back to her corner, received a brief bow and was left for the more obvious charms of a younger and more flirtatious partner. I became interested in this phenomenon, and asked for an explanation. The shadows, it seemed, were the wives of the officers. Only a few years before—perhaps only two seasons ago—they had swelled the ranks of the perfectly-gowned and fresh-complexioned girls with whom their husbands were now dancing. Now they were retired to modest apartments in Vienna, where they were expected to see to the needs of rapidly increasing families, and from which they were removed as rarely as possible, dusted and taken along to such functions as Court etiquette demanded.

I had another and closer look at them. A tragedy could have been written about those poor women by one of the great satirists of the world. Gaunt, faded, wearing toilets dating from previous seasons, their faces—though most of them had once been beautiful—now wore a common expression. It was a general look of resignation and tired unhappiness ; they did not dream of resenting outwardly their disgraceful neglect or the perfectly obvious and open flirtations, the languishing glances and edged compliments which their husbands practised contemptuously before their very eyes. If there was an aching heart or a bitter thought, let it be decently hidden away in one of those shadowy corners and ignored ! I have heard it said that Austria is unhappy now ; I do not believe there can be more real unhappiness than I saw in that brilliant Court circle in pre-War Vienna !

At this ball I met a girl friend from convent days, the Countess Minnie von Westerhausen, who had recently married Prince Leringen. They were cousins of the poet Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva, and distant cousins of

Queen Victoria. Minnie Leringen was possessed of a strong character and considerable cleverness ; she did not join the shadowy groups in the corners, but could hold her place without fear against the most lovely members of the younger Viennese society. But she was an exceptional woman. We laughed again over our convent memories, when we had played at just such balls as this, and had been reduced to using sheets for trains, while those who drew the slips entitling them to the honour of acting as cavaliers had to produce their own paper decorations.

The Archduke Rudolf was most attentive to me, and I danced with him several times and sat out twice in his company. He, too, was a perfect dancer ; the music was of Strauss ; it was an exquisite experience. He brought me back finally to my place with the Princess von Schwarzburg, and whispered to me that, as he danced with me, he had felt as if he soared to Heaven with an angel in his arms, welcomed by the music of the spheres. I am afraid I smiled.

Many years afterwards my husband remarked that the compliments of the Austrian officers were always too daring and neither spontaneous nor in good taste. I said to him, “ Then say something now to me that is both ! ” He looked at me with his wonderful, expressive eyes, and said, “ When I am with you I cannot speak ; I can only think and feel ! ” We had been married then for over twenty years. The wives of Italian officers are not left to pine in corners !

The Royal party retired from the ball at two o'clock ; I left shortly afterwards ; next day the Court festivities had ended and I was packing my trunks before leaving Vienna.

CHAPTER XXII

1884-85

Munich in Lent. At old Heidelberg. A castle in the Tyrol. A Saint's spinning-wheel. At a Royal wedding.

TWO days after this ball we took our leave of the Empress, who was just as sweet and affectionate as on the day I was presented. We went back to Munich, to make some necessary small purchases to prepare for the Lent season, which we were to spend at Heidelberg, where my half-brother was still studying. I particularly wanted to go there then to hear a course of lectures given by the famous Professor Gerlach on "Beliefs and Knowledge."

The first person we met at Heidelberg was Philip of Estre-hazy, one of the boys who had helped to recover Grandmother's shawl on the famous occasion of the Mormon meeting. He was as bright and pleasant as ever, and laughed with us over our childhood adventures. My sister Isabel accompanied me on this visit, as the lectures were approved by the religious direction on whose judgment she was now relying more and more, and she was a great addition to our party, for she was clever enough and could be excellent company when she chose to exert herself.

The lectures proved of extraordinary interest, and were delivered with a depth of sincerity seldom obvious in religious speakers. The Professor disposed so logically and effectively of the arguments of the then novel German atheistic school of thought, and argued so compellingly and assuredly on the ways in which modern science and discovery were adding proof after proof to the main tenets of the Biblical story that his very being emanated conviction;

and I have since, by means of his arguments, emerged victorious from many a keen dispute with clever adherents to sceptic worldliness.

During this stay at Heidelberg, we made many expeditions up and down the Rhine, whose surrounding country is an open history book, and a living proof of the truth of many of its own old sagas and traditions. Often at nights we were awakened by student serenades, which were then still greatly practised, and I used to lie awake listening to the skilfully-played guitars and lutes and the perfectly-blended chorus of youthful voices.

When we returned to Munich the whole city was in mourning and consternation at the news, which had just been received, of the tragic drowning in Stemberg Lake of the sombre but much-loved King Ludwig. We went to look at him at his lying-in-state, and the stern face looked more beautiful than it had ever done in life, and now also it looked at rest.

After a short stay at the capital, my sister and I accepted an invitation from the Prince and Princess von Iratzburg Ysenburg-Bernstein to stay with them at their wonderful and ancient castle in the Tyrol. This castle dates from the time of the First Crusade, and is built on a height overlooking the Rhine and opposite the city of Schwarzburg. A spacious courtyard is guarded by mighty walls which bristle with pointed towers and high battlements, and the defences frown grimly down from a wellnigh impregnable pinnacle of rock, of which it almost seems a natural part. One wing of the castle is furnished in every detail as it was in crusading days, and there is a splendid museum whose contents can hardly be matched elsewhere in the world.

While we were there, the Archduke Salvator of Austria came to stay for a few days, accompanied by the Graf von Turkheimer and the Prince of Rudolfstadt, making a most welcome addition to the gathering which before was almost entirely composed of ladies. One day, as we were going through the museum, the Archduke stopped before an ancient and beautifully-carved spinning-wheel. “ Of what sweet and virginal dreams and poesy that little wheel

must in its time have been the confidante!” he exclaimed.

The Prince von Ysenburg-Bernstein, who was showing us round the exhibits, smiled. “You are right,” he said; “that spinning-wheel belonged to Saint Kirngurde, very many centuries ago.”

“Why,” I broke in, “does no one ever use it now? If I had holy Kirngurde's spinning-wheel, I should certainly use it myself.”

“But surely you cannot spin—the art has died out long ago, has it not?” asked the Prince wonderingly.

“On the contrary, I have been taught to spin by my grandmother, who was Scotch and therefore conversant with the practice,” I replied, “and I have often used a wheel.”

The Prince bowed. “Permit me, then,” he said, “to have the honour of presenting you with Saint Kirngurde's wheel; the Saint herself would wish it, I am sure, to find a resting-place in the hands of another Royal maiden.”

But I could not accept the gift. I thanked the Prince, but assured him that, if after all the intervening years the wheel was once more set to work, it would almost certainly fall to pieces; and I could not in any case rob his museum of such a priceless exhibit. Besides, as I told him, I was a wanderer on the face of the earth; had I had a lady's bower in which to place it, I might have felt otherwise concerning it.

Nothing more was said at the time. Many years later, however, when I was living at Varese with my husband, an immense box came from Vienna for me one day. It contained a perfect copy of the Saint's spinning-wheel, wonderfully executed by a famous Viennese craftsman, and it had been sent to me by the Prince von Ysenburg-Bernstein. It has been in more or less constant use ever since, and still stands in my boudoir here.

During this Tyrolean stay, I took a number of excursions in the surrounding country, which is, in my opinion, the most beautiful in the world, with its exquisite pantomime villages, great spreading woods and wonderful mountain scenes like theatre back-cloths. I remember one journey

we had taken to see a famous church, and in wandering round the churchyard afterwards I was struck by the fact that all the headstones bore women's names, with long accounts of their virtues and qualities. I asked the old woman who was showing us round why this was, and she replied placidly, “Because, Highness, most of our menfolk die in the Penitentiary.”

One glorious morning, we set out for a mountain-climbing expedition in full force, and with a couple of local lads as guides, to seek a height from which was visible what was said to be the finest view in all the Tyrol. When we had climbed for some distance, the path divided, and our guides disagreed volubly as to which was our route. My brother insisted that it was the one to the left, but Isabel protested that anyone who had the slightest sense of distance and direction could see at a glance that it was the one to the right. After a warm discussion, we decided to separate and make a wager of it, the winners being those who first reached the view height.

Isabel, decided as ever, pushed forward at once, and I went with her, as I knew she would be out of humour for at least a week if I doubted her accuracy of judgment. Count von Turkheimer and the Prince von Wrede, two young men of our party, came with us, and little Terese von Donauroth came because she wanted to be with me. She was visiting us at the time, and was then, as always, sweetly pretty and unsophisticated; poor little Princess—what a fate was reserved for her! She ended her life with her face to a wall and an execution party behind her levelling their rifles at her slender body, after having been wrongfully accused of spying against her own country! None of us in that happy party dreamed of such things then.

We had our donkey loaded with provisions and the tent in which we proposed to take our lunch, and we wended our way steadily upwards. It was a glorious day, and each fresh turn of the path brought us some new and enchanting view of fantastic moss-covered rocks, deep shadowy grottoes, tumbling streams and masses of mountain flowers. Isabel was in a brilliant humour, as always when she had her

own way in the teeth of opposition, and kept us in constant laughter by her descriptions of the supposed wanderings and tribulations of the other party on the wrong track. The two young men sang snatches of Alpine songs or declaimed suitable passages from random plays, and we greatly enjoyed our climb.

At midday, the tent was pitched, the fire lighted and we attacked luncheon heartily amid great rejoicing. An old man and two youths, evidently woodcutters, passed as we were near the end of our repast, and they were regaled with some of the good things left over. Afterwards they wended their way upwards ; we were soon to meet them again.

After lunch, we continued our climb for a couple of hours, still without coming to the spot we were seeking. The trees grew very tall and dark, the undergrowth became thick and impeded our way, the path was momentarily more vague and difficult, and finally disappeared. There, however, we discovered another path leading away to the left, still going upward, and Isabel decided to take it. Our provisions were exhausted, as we had expected to be home again by tea-time, and we still had the descent to negotiate. We pushed along faster, and suddenly came to the brink of a tremendous precipice, where the path ended abruptly. There was no way round it ; and as if to add to our exasperation, straight below us at an infinite distance we could see the pointed roofs of the town from which we had set out.

It was already getting towards evening, the donkey at this point sat down and refused to be moved, the lad who was supposed to be guiding us sat down too and wept piteously, audibly fearing that he would never see his home again, Isabel was angry and dignified, and the situation was altogether quite unpleasant. Suddenly we heard the thudding of a woodcutter's axe near us, and our hopes rose again even to discover the proximity of human life of any sort. It proved to be the trio we had seen at luncheon, and they told us with many head-shakings that we could not possibly get home till next morning, as the descent was not safe at night because of the deep crevasses on the way. We had to abandon the view of the nestling township below us which,

alas ! we could not reach that way, and go back through the deepening shadows past rocks which now looked grim and threatening for a weary hour, till our new friends brought us to a tiny chapel erected in honour of Our Lady of Wise Counsel. There, under the protection of the Holy Madonna, we were able to get shelter for the night, for our thin tents were useless.

Isabel was furious with everyone, we were all dead tired and starving, and a most uncomfortable night was in prospect, for we had not even anything on which to rest. The old woodcutter, however, most generously pressed upon us the remains of the food we had given him, which he had thriftily saved for his own evening meal, and we all shared the meagre ration, which, however, put fresh heart into our party. Count Turkheimer's military cloak, the Prince's dust-coat and our one heavy plaid, which a merciful Heaven had ordered that we should casually bring with us, were given to us girls, and we contrived to make ourselves fairly comfortable in the little quiet chapel, while the young men and our guide made themselves a shelter outside with the tents and some cut branches. My last memory of that night was of the pale figure of the Holy Mother standing protectively above us with the Blessed Child in her arms, placidly smiling down on us in reassuring peace. The next thing I knew was that the sunlight was streaming in a golden beam full of dusty dancing motes above us.

Our old friend, the woodcutter, had descended in the very early morning to the town, and we were surprised when we woke to hear outside the voice of my brother talking to our companions. He had come up with the woodcutter ; there was steaming coffee, fragrant new rolls, eggs, creamy milk and delicious mild Tyrolean cheese. We refreshed ourselves in a nearby icy streamlet, and then enjoyed a breakfast which by common consent was the best we had ever tasted, and at which our woodcutter friends waited on us with a grave dignity and natural courtesy more pleasing than the polished attentions of any palace lackey. Isabel was a little sharp of tongue to show everyone that she was ready for a fight if need be, but the boys for once were

kindness and tactfulness personified, and her good humour was soon restored.

We enjoyed our descent, after having thanked and rewarded our good friends in need, and late in the afternoon we were met in the little town by the Prince von Ysenburg-Bernstein, who took us back to the castle again in his huge brake and six. The Princess von Schwartzburg had arrived during our absence, and as always she kept the whole assembly alive with her unfailing wit.

When the time came for me to leave the Tyrol, I was due to attend the wedding of my cousin and dearest friend, Marie de Chartres d'Orleans, who was to marry Princess Alexandra of Wales's youngest brother, Prince Waldemar of Denmark. The wedding, which was to take place at the end of October, was the realisation of one of Grandmother's most cherished dreams, and the two young people had always planned it, but not until then could Monseigneur Hulst, the agent for the Orleans family, overcome the objections that were aroused by the proposed alliance between a Protestant Prince and a Catholic Princess. The permission of the Holy See having now been won, however, proceedings were to go forward at once.

The Castle Ese had been loaned for the ceremony by the Count de Paris, and there we were joined by numbers of royal and noble guests and relations. The King and Queen of Denmark were present, as well as the Prince and Princess of Wales, Ferdinand de Colny (afterwards King of Bulgaria), Princess Clementine and several of the relations of the Spanish and Parma Bourbons.

The ceremony in the beautiful and historic chapel was one of the most interesting and impressive things I have ever seen. Everyone present was deeply touched by the simple and sincere address of Monseigneur Hulst, and his wise words of advice to the Royal pair. Afterwards the bridal couple, followed by the procession of famous guests, repaired to the celebrated “white salon” of the castle, which had been transformed temporarily into a Protestant chapel, and there the Lutheran marriage service was pronounced by the Chaplain-Royal of Denmark, the Rev. Eric Jantzen,

who had come with the Royal Danish suite. The bride, who wore simple white *crepe de Chine* with exquisite lace, was without ornament save for a few fine pearls, and I have never seen a more lovely ensemble or a happier face.

I received a pressing invitation from the Royal couple to follow them shortly to their home in Denmark, but that pleasure I was forced to postpone, as I had already laid definite plans to visit my half-brother in America. “What shall I do in Denmark without you!” said Marie despairingly. “My Danish isn’t nearly perfect, and it would seem so selfish to speak in French. Besides, Waldemar doesn’t like the language at all.”

“Speak English to him—he speaks it perfectly,” I said. “As for Danish, as soon as you are in the country, and hear it constantly spoken, you will find it second nature to you also to use it.”

“I’ll try,” she said, “but oh, come back to me soon and stay a little while with me at least! I shall count the days!”

I promised to visit her new home as soon as I returned from the States, and then, after a most affectionate and rather sorrowful leave-taking, we parted. Princess Marie of Denmark, as she was now called, followed my advice. For the first year or two after her marriage, she always spoke English, which is much preferred in Denmark to French, and thereafter she spoke fluent Danish. Her sympathetic spirit and quick understanding soon won all hearts, and she became one of the most adored Princesses Denmark has ever known.

CHAPTER XXIII

1885

Electricity in the backwoods. An English Christmas in the New World. With President Cleveland at the White House. A Presidential ball. An American tragedy.

WHEN we arrived in the States, we were met by my half-brother, Hamish Cunningham (who had left his diplomatic career) and Philip Estrehazy. The three of them had formed an enterprising little company for the promotion of the use of electricity, which was then in its infancy. Edison was then little more than a half-unknown inventor, and the boys, seeing the practical possibilities that lay ahead of electricity in its various branches, had made a long and considerable study of it. Now they were financing an effort in Pennsylvania to improve and popularise the telephone, to inaugurate a company for the supply of electric light, and to experiment in other directions in which power might be used. Often in those days they used to have feverish discussions about the possibility of talking across the atmosphere without the aid of wires, and they carried out a number of preliminary efforts, which may perhaps have been the very first attempts ever made at wireless telegraphy. As I shall tell, however, lack of money compelled them to cease their ambitious efforts, and so it may be that the world use of radio was delayed for many years.

My sister Isabel accompanied me on this American trip because she wished to escape from Court life and have leisure for reflection and prayer; I went very largely because my heart was calling me elsewhere, and because I knew it would be impolitic to follow its desires and the requests

brought me in the urgent letters which came for me by almost every post from England. Those who do not know the burdens that a crown or Royal birth may impose, should sometimes thank God for the heartbreak from which their lesser station may have saved them.

Isabel and I remained for a fortnight at New York while the boys went out to prepare the old Dutch farm-house which had been taken outside Reading for our use. It was a primitive place, built more for strength than convenience, and it was furnished in a style that may have suited the early settlers but which needed augmentation before we could trust ourselves happily there. We stayed meanwhile at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, once the glory of hospitable America, but already, to our thinking, losing some of the éclat which used to make it famous. We went to see a performance of *Pinafore* at the “Park Theatre,” and of course we enjoyed it, as I have always enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan productions, and do even now. It was then, I believe, new to America.

We came out to our new home just before Christmas, and found ourselves a very pleasant party. Mary de Marigny had joined us, and also a young man named St. John, a friend of Hamish Cunningham and a cousin of the British Ambassador at Washington. He was very musical and clever and amusing. We enjoyed a real old-fashioned Christmas after the English style, and the snow outside added the proper wintry touch, whilst our expeditions on fast sleighs were exciting and interesting and gave us a keen zest for the seasonable fare.

Pennsylvania in those days was a very different place from what it has since become. It was thinly populated, and we used to travel great distances to try to interest local influential people in the use of the telephone. One morning, we awoke to find that our hen-roosts had been entirely cleared by ravaging wolves. The boys set out with guns and killed three, and the rest of the pack kept away from us afterwards, though we often heard them howling at nights. This backwoods existence was very pleasant to Isabel and me after our crowded Court life in

Europe ; for the time being we became quite enthusiastic Americans !

A great entertainment was planned that March at the White House. President Cleveland, who was there during his first term in office, was a bachelor, and his sister Alice acted for him as “Lady of the White House” ; and right well she carried out her duties. She was an intimate friend of my sister, so we received a pressing invitation to the Washington ceremony.

Some years before, during one of our previous visits, I had attended the Installation of a President there, and had been struck by the queer jumble of pretension and rather crude grandeur which contrasted so strikingly with the touching and splendid simplicity and sincerity of the rival candidates themselves. An honest and straightforward handshake after a carriage drive together through the crowded streets of the citadel, a quiet “You come in and I go out ; God be with you !” That was all, but one knew it was a genuine wish, very different from some of the flowery speeches of the calculating politicians of the Old World. I hope the same spirit lives in America yet !

While we were in New York, we had deliberately avoided publicity, but now that we had come to Washington by invitation that was no longer possible, and we met again numbers of our old friends. The glamour of the “Princesses of the Enchanted Castle” had not grown less with our absence ; in fact, America, which professes such equality and contempt for rank, is invariably the one place in the world where rank is an extreme attraction.

The great day of the White House Ball came at last, and a very splendid entertainment was given, attended by all the leading families then in America. The diplomatic corps was present in full force, and some of the ladies' toilets were wonderfully attractive. At such a function, only the best of United States society was invited, and when that happens, the result is always comparable with anything that the Old World can show in taste and discretion.

Shortly after this, we were invited to another most select and delightful entertainment, given by our old friend

Cassy Hamilton. Whatever she did was always deservedly admired—with the one exception of her marriage. My brother used to say of her that every ribbon, every flower of her ensemble was one more line that completed the perfect poem of her appearance. Some little time after this ball which we attended, Cassy Hamilton was found dead in her bathroom. She had opened her veins, dying like a Roman patrician of old. On the night of her ball, she was all gaiety and laughter. I never saw her again.

Another pleasant evening we spent at the house of Maria Honoree Grant, wife of Colonel Grant, son of the famous President of that name. Mrs. Potter Palmer was there ; she was still amazingly good-looking though then she must have been well on in the fifties. She looked about thirty, I remember, and she was still universally admired and known as the “ Queen of Chicago.”

At this ball I met the Hegeman Lindencrones, the famous General of the Danish-Prussian War in 1864. He was now Danish Ambassador at Washington, and was a magnificent and striking figure. He was so obviously surprised and delighted to see me that it did my heart good to hear him. He was a most charming speaker, and we talked for a long while of Denmark and mutual friends there, and especially of Marie's wedding to Prince Walde-mar, in which he was most interested. I have heard lately from a friend in Denmark that he is still alive and often speaks of me ; he must now be well over ninety years old.

The English Ambassador, Thornton, was there at the ball too, with his Lady. She was a very quiet and rather shy person, most unlike the usual brilliant ladies of the diplomatic circle, and she spoke very little and did not seek company. I heard from the Ambassador of my dear old friend, Lord Dufferin, who had just then commenced his Embassy at Rome, and we talked affectionately of him for some time, for he was everyone's friend.

After a fortnight's stay at the White House, we returned to our cabin in the backwoods again. The house we occupied was erected right on the river bank, and opposite us in mid-stream was a small island called Flying Hill, then a great

attraction to the good folk of Reading for a short summer outing. At the tiny hotel on the island, a sort of improvised dance was held every Sunday for the trippers who came down on that day by a special steamer and thronged the place.

We possessed a small row-boat and often used to pull over to the island in the dusk of the evening, to watch the joyous invaders, who were the spiritual ancestors of the Coney Island trippers of to-day. The language mostly spoken on the island was a sort of pidgin-English-Pennsylvanian-Dutch—a most amazing mixture! Occasionally it developed into German for a phrase or two; I used to wonder whether a *soupçon* of Chinese or Hebrew would have given the inhabitants any trouble to understand.

The electricity business in which the boys had sunk so much of their capital was now in a precarious state. They received a good deal of encouragement locally, but they had been tempted into some sort of a contract with a telephone company, and through the shrewdness of its promoters, they found themselves liable for meeting all the local losses, while, so it seemed to me, the profits automatically found their way into the bigger company's coffers.

My brother, who had exhausted his entire available finances on the undertaking, having a childish confidence in his contract, asked me if I could come to his assistance, and I put at his disposal the entire block of Southern shares which I still possessed. The telephone company's bank, however, taking its cue from another famous American trust, said that the shares offered were really of no value since the War, and made a credit on them accordingly.

At the same time, my sister Isabel placed her division of the Southern shares with the banking concern of Mr. House, of Housetown, Texas, who as a young man had acted as legal adviser to Grandmother. Those shares were cashed at their full face value, so obviously there was still a perfectly good market for them, and we consequently resented the way in which the other company had acted in that as well as in all our other dealings with them.

The same Mr. House who acted for Isabel was the father

of Colonel House, President Wilson's intimate friend and adviser, who played such an important part in the Versailles peacemaking. The whole family has always been marked by that same characteristic generosity and honesty, and in that way they are typical of the true Americans of the old stock.

Towards July of that year, the boys found themselves quite unable to go on paying such heavy losses, and decided to give up their ambitions in that direction altogether. We paid the rent of our farm-house up to the end of the year, sent our furniture to Reading, and quitted the States a little wiser than we had come.

Isabel went for a prolonged visit to a distant cousin, the Princess Massimo, my brother returned to Munich to take up another branch of study, and I proceeded to Paris to replenish my wardrobe before my promised Danish visit.

CHAPTER XXIV

1885-86

With Princess Marie of Denmark. In the Garden of the North.
An informal dance at Fredensborg. A newspaper indiscretion.
At a charity concert with Christine Nielsen. Parisian favourites.

I FOUND my cousin alone at her summer residence of Charlottenberg. Prince Waldemar being a Commander in the Danish Navy, he was often absent on board, and at this time he was away on a cruise in the Eastern seas. Princess Marie of Denmark, as my cousin was now styled, was still working hard at her study of the language, and she gave me a greeting so warm that I wondered how I could have stayed away for so long from my dear childhood friend.

The Royal Court was at Fredensborg, and the annual gathering of all the sons and daughters of the Danish House had already begun. Princess Alexandra of Wales was there, with the Duke of Clarence and her daughters, though Prince George was at Malta with a British naval squadron. Queen Olga of Greece came with her two daughters, and the Tsar and Tsarina were expected shortly.

As usual, we were to and fro the whole time between Fredensborg and our residence. My brother and Hamish Cunningham had come with our yacht, and were anchored out in the Sound opposite Charlottenberg, and we often took cruises along that lovely coast and out into the Baltic.

One delightful day we invited a party of friends from Fredensborg to meet us for luncheon on the famous Island of Horne, historically notable as the place where the great astronomer Tycho Brahe had his observatory. We had our refreshments served in the shadow of the ruins of his castle,

Uramenberg, and then spent the afternoon in exploring the locality.

On another occasion, we made an excursion along the north coast of Solund. Leaving Fredensborg, where we had been staying for a couple of days, we proceeded in a carriage, while a suite of servants with provisions and so on followed in another vehicle in our wake. The Duke of Clarence, with my brother and Hamish, followed our inland route by working round the coast in the yacht, keeping in touch with us by day by minute-guns and at night by rockets. We had with us, I remember, a most comprehensive book giving details of all the famous historical sites we passed, and Marie was delighted at this new method of getting into touch with the history and traditions of her adopted people.

In September, when the Russian Royal party arrived, our usual little cosy circle of friends was completed, and everyone felt happy and at home. We had music nearly every evening ; there were then some very fine musicians among the reigning European houses, and exquisite renderings of difficult classics alternated with the simple songs of our various homelands. Whist and a variety of round games kept us constantly amused, and once a week we had dancing also.

The seventh of September was Queen Louise's birthday, and a great dinner was held at which numbers of local leading families were present. After the dinner, an informal dance took place. As was usual on such occasions, I spent nearly all the evening with the Duke of Clarence. We had so much to tell each other, our interests were so allied, and we never seemed to tire in those delightful days even of the quietest conversation.

The Princess of Wales was as charming as ever. For once, she was all in white, relieved with delicate mauve, and she was wearing that night some wonderful amethysts and diamonds. Her toilet was richly trimmed with rare old lace, of which she was always a passionate admirer and perfect connoisseur. The Tsarina wore a magnificent gown of crimson tulle and *crepe de Chine*, and also some of the celebrated Romanov diamonds. Queen Olga, in saffron

Letters to the Author from Queen Vera of Wurtemburg and Queen Olga of Greece.

Aug. 20. 1883. Her
Majesty's
Boudewijnsburg



Princess of

Yours very obedient
and affec^t son
Wm. Edward
Montgomery
Gardiner, Prince of Wales,
and Duke of Connaught.



Mother there

Yours very
affectionately
Edward

Edward
Colville de Beaufort
Prince of Wales

Heia

Aug. 20. 1883. Her
Majesty's
Boudewijnsburg

Yours very
affectionately
Edward
Colville de Beaufort
Prince of Wales

Heia

Olga

satin, looking unusually happy and charming, made an exquisite contrast to her Royal sisters, and the men's brilliant uniforms and glittering orders almost dazzled the eye.

As a last cruise on my brother's yacht, we arranged to visit the ancient city of Odense, on the Island of Fione, one of the most historic spots of all the North. In the Cathedral of Odense, Eric Ejegod's brother Canute was murdered at the altar ; at that very spot, Albert Victor and I renewed our vow to erect a monument in memory of King Eric, the chosen hero of all our fancies.

As soon as the news of our visit spread among the population of Odense, great excitement was caused, and crowds gathered to try to see us pass. There was a wonderful enthusiasm displayed towards Albert Victor, for he was, of course, considered in those days as the future King of England, being the eldest son of Prince Edward of Wales and the beloved Danish Princess Alexandra ; and his direct descent from King Eric gave him an added glamour. The popular welcome was warmly extended, too, towards my cousin Marie, who was already a general favourite of the nation.

When the party at Fredensborg broke up, I came over to England with Queen Alexandra, for it had been arranged that I was to spend a long holiday with her at Sandringham. That plan, however, came to an abrupt end. Certain English newspapers whose status should have given them better manners began very openly to hint that the plans already decided for the Duke of Clarence by Queen Victoria were receiving definite opposition from that Prince, and that he was showing instead a decided preference for a Princess connected with the Royal House of France. This was all the more an indiscretion, as French republicanism at that time was not so assured as it has since become, and any encouragement to our House was regarded in Paris with considerable suspicion.

It was thought in our circle that the wisest thing was for me to leave England for the time being. Albert Victor resolutely opposed this arrangement ; his keen sense of

chivalry alone made him angered that I should thus be made to cut short what had promised to be a very pleasant visit. But it was not a time for selfishness or stubbornness on the part of any of us. “ It is our task to suffer in the interests of our beloved nation,” said Queen Alexandra to me when I said good-bye, “ but it seems unfair that you must suffer too ! ” She was very sad ; our little circle had been so intimate and happy till that time.

As it would have been too noticeable to leave England immediately, I accepted a shooting invitation, though I was never very fond of the sport. I hunted, too, and was passionately fond of the hard riding, the thrill of tackling hedge and ditch and fence and the music of the hounds giving tongue on a moist morning when the scent was good. But I always left the field before the end. There seemed to me such a lack of chivalry in mere enjoyment of the slaughter of the one by the many, and in watching an exhausted, sobbing beast first mutilated by men and finally torn to pieces by hounds. Once, I thoroughly disgraced myself by refusing the brush ; it was never offered to me again during my rather brief hunting experiences.

Lady Isabel had for some time previously been failing, and now she went to Ireland to stay and rest with some relations. Lady Randolph Churchill was then desirous of a continental journey on account of a disagreement with her husband, so she joined me when we were ready to go abroad, and we went to the South of Italy by way of Paris, where Mary de Marigny and my sister Isabel joined us. It was a mortifying leave-taking from England, this hurried exile, but it had to be ; politics must always come first in our lives.

While we were in Paris, we were invited to a great Charity Ball at the Scandinavian Club, the proceeds of the entertainment being devoted to needy Northern artistes. Christine Nilsson, the famous Swedish singer, appeared in public for the last time in her great career at that ball. She was still wonderful, though becoming just a little forced on the top notes, and she had begun to look her years.

I had heard her some years before in *Faust* at the “ Grand

Opera ” ; she was then a perfect Margherita, and executed the very difficult songs of her part splendidly. She looked so fitted for her part, with her long, natural, blonde tresses and sincere, sweet face ; a contrast to other famous singers I have seen in the same rôle. I heard Patti, too ; an exquisite voice, possibly even better than Mme Nilsson's, but her appearance was against her, and the big fair wig on her small head quite spoiled the effect.

Later, I was able to compare with these great singers a more modern artiste, Tetrazzini. She is a great actress and has a wonderful voice, but oh ! her looks ! I saw her in *Rigoletto*, I remember, and she sang the confession kneeling before her father, “ Tutte le feste al tempio.” I had to shut my eyes to keep the illusion of that perfect voice, but even so the thought forced itself upon me—will she ever be able unaided to get up again, for she is so very stout ! But she did.

After Christine Nilsson had retired, amid storms of applause such as I have seldom heard, there was an excellent choir of men's voices, beautifully modulated and controlled. It contrasted favourably in my mind with a male voice choir I had heard at the Paris International Exhibition, when three hundred Upsala students literally made the ground beneath us shake by the massing of their powerful basses.

I sang twice, my second selection being a Danish translation of “ Home, Sweet Home,” which was very happily received. It was a most interesting affair altogether, and it was followed by a dance, which I very much enjoyed. A party in costume gave an exhibition of the Norwegian national “ Springdands,” stepping that lively measure with proper spirit and abandon.

We stayed for a few days with the Countess Sparre in her apartments in the Faubourg St. Germain, and attended a number of *petites sauteries* given by the Duchess de Rochfoucauld, the Princess Sagau and others. They were most enjoyable and informal—personal gatherings of friends.

We also attended some of the social gatherings at the Danish Legation to enjoy music, dancing and cards. The

two most notable men in Paris at that time were, strangely enough, both youthful acquaintances of mine, two young Danes whom we had known, the one as a diplomat in Washington and the other an immediate neighbour at Grandmother's Danish villa. They were Herman von Rothe and Christmas Holmfelt, and they had certainly grown into quite personable young men.

Their fair-haired, Viking type of good looks happened to be the rage of Paris at the moment, and they were feted and exhibited all over Parisian society, so that for the time a hostess could offer few greater attractions than their presence at one of her soirées. They excited such flutterings of female hearts that whenever they appeared, the young men were actually mobbed by all the beauties of aristocratic France, and they received such adulation and suffered such hunting as can be manifested with such brazen candour in no other city but effervescent Paris.

CHAPTER XXV

1886

An Embassy ball. Farewell to Prince Charming. A Roman gathering. A meeting and a parting.

DURING this time in Paris, I had letters from England by every post, saying that everything was dead and dull without me, and pleading with me to return. What could I do ! Inclinations and duties are so hard to reconcile. I shed many bitter tears at the cruel ending that had been put to our deep friendship, but I knew that it was not for me to alter events.

On the second day of the New Year, a great ball was given at the British Embassy in the Rue St. Honoré, and we were all invited. Those balls were always great events among Parisian society, and this one marked the formal opening of the season there. After the fall of the French Empire, the Presidential dinners at the Elysée were considered in Paris only very secondary social gatherings, for even to-day in Republican France, the supporters of the “ancien régime” are many and their imitators infinitely more numerous still. France is an adept at pretending to “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité,” but it has always possessed a remarkable appreciation of the sounding value of a title.

I remember an afternoon during this stay when I went to the head post office in Paris. It was still situated then in one of the half-ruined wings of the Tuileries, and I went personally, accompanied only by my maid, to send a cablegram. The official who dealt with my request treated me with the bear-like politeness which infallibly marks out the

postal employee of all the countries of the world, and took a delight in making all possible difficulties. To my polite request, he merely answered abruptly, “ Comprenez-vous Français ? ” I was somewhat nettled, as I had spoken in perfectly accurate French, so I said : “ Better than you understand the courtesy that is your duty ! ”

With a terrific scowl, he informed me that I stood before a public authority, and roughly demanded my name. “ Montesquiou ! ” I said quietly. “ Pardon, a thousand pardons, my Princess ! ” he exclaimed feverishly. “ Your will shall be done immediately—immediately.” Emelie laughed. “ What's in a name ! ” she quoted ; but even at that the official had nothing to say.

Our party arrived at the Embassy Ball at eleven o'clock, and found the *salons* already as crowded as the carefully despatched invitations allowed ; it was a feature there that a crush was not permitted. The great rooms were brilliantly lighted, the dresses and uniforms were resplendent, and everyone seemed gay. Our party had just entered the famous “ yellow *salon* ” when the great double doors were flung wide, and the Master of the Ceremonies announced in a stentorian voice : “ His Royal Highness, the Duke of Clarence ! ”

A great excitement succeeded at this absolutely unexpected visit, and all those who had a right to do so crowded at the heels of the Ambassador as he went to meet the distinguished guest. The Prince, however, had come with one set purpose, and as soon as he had satisfied briefly the conventions of the moment, he sought me out. He looked unhappy and worried, and his first words were—“ You must not go away from Paris, unless you return to England ! ” I told him that our tickets were taken, and that we were due to leave in a few days. “ You shall not do so ! ” he said quietly.

I begged him not to talk of our misfortune, but to forget everything but the happy present. We danced and sat out and talked, just as in those remembered days in the gardens at Fredensborg ; we were like happy children, with no future and no past, but only comradely love and deep content. At

three o'clock, we took our leave. "I shall see you tomorrow," said the Prince decisively. "Pa Gjensyn" (*au revoir*). "Farvel!" (Good-bye) I said blindly.

At eight o'clock the next morning, we were on board the express for Rome, having hurriedly completed our packing, expedited all our arrangements by the aid of special couriers and changed our plans so that we could leave three days before we had originally intended. I was half dead when we arrived, and was put to bed at once, that I might revive for a great ball which was being given next evening in our honour by Isabel's close friend, Evelyn McKay, now Princess Colonna. Isabel and I were to stay for a while at her house, Lady Randolph Churchill was going to American friends, and Mary de Marigny with her maid and couriers meant to go on to Messina for a couple of months.

Next day I was still rather confused and unhappy, and at dinner that night I expressed a doubt as to whether I should be able to meet the fatigue of the ball. Also, our toilets, specially ordered from a great Paris designer, had not arrived. No one would hear of my defection, however, and telegrams were despatched peremptorily ordering that the dresses should be hurried to us at all possible speed from whatever point *en route* they had been delayed. No answer came from Paris, however, and the groom we sent to the station reported that nothing had arrived for us.

At nine o'clock, after a great consultation, Emelie appeared with the only possible dress left for me to wear. I had worn it once in Paris, and a glass of champagne had been spilt down one side; otherwise it was a charming gown. Evelyn Colonna found me a wonderful flounce of Chantilly lace, and advised that it should be draped over the stain to hide it. Emelie set to work at once, and with her usual skill (she might well have been a great dressmaker, as I told her often) made the gown more beautiful than it had ever been, for it was a wonderful pink thing hand-embroidered in white and silver, and the wine-mark had really only been a small one.

At that moment the bell of the outer apartment rang,

and a lackey appeared bearing a huge bouquet of Maréchal Niel roses and Malmaison carnations from Fabricus Colonna. They were my favourite flowers, and the sight of them made my sadness leave me a little. A bottle of champagne was served there and then, and when I had finally donned the ball dress, even Isabel paid me a compliment, and there was a general air of festivity.

As we descended into the grand *salon* through the inner door, the outer door was opened and through it entered a group of Alpine officers. The Alpine Regiment was on its way to Naples to join a man-of-war which was to take it to Africa, and as Fabricus was an Alpini himself, a group of his friends in the regiment had been invited to the ball.

Standing watching them enter, I received one of the great shocks of my life. There, coming through the doors opposite, in deep conversation with a brother officer, was Albert Victor himself! A second later, I saw that it was not he but a young Alpini lieutenant who bore a most striking resemblance to him, though I could see now that he was taller and more powerfully built.

As if by telepathy, the young man looked up, and his eyes met mine. They were just like the Prince's—deep blue, magnetic, kind, and it seemed to me as I looked fascinatedly into them that I had known them all my life. Then, before I had spoken to him or even knew his name, I knew that this, not the future heir to the English throne, was the man for whom my soul had been always seeking. The other was a deep, sympathetic friendship on my side, a comradeship such as I have experienced in my life for perhaps only one other person, my cousin Marie de Chartres. But this . . .

I saw a vivid look of surprise and what I can only describe as recognition in the young officer's eyes, though of course we had never met before. He told me later that he stopped in the middle of a sentence addressed to his brother lieutenant, and then turned to him and said : “ I am going to marry that girl ! ” His friend stared at him in astonishment. “ Do you know who she is ? ” he exclaimed. “ You must be mad ! She is a Princess of Royal blood.”

“I am a nobleman of Venice and an Italian officer,” he replied quietly.

A few moments after that meeting of our eyes, he had persuaded Prospero Colonna to present him to me, and was seeking for a dance. But my programme was already full. That, however, did not daunt him in the least. No sooner had the cotillion commenced than he contrived to make a mistake in his position, and instead of just touching my fingertips and continuing the chain, he took me out and joined the waltzing one couple before his time. At such great gatherings, it would have been no less unusual had a guest suddenly forgotten his native tongue!

I saw astonished faces all around us, and for a second my rightful cavalier hesitated whether to claim me. Then, seeing that it would only cause confusion, he accepted the inevitable, and took the lady left by my new partner. As my companion's strong arm deftly guided me among the maze of dancing couples, he looked down at me with those wonderful blue eyes and whispered a thousand breathless excuses, but danced triumphantly on. What need had I of excuses; already I was deeply and contentedly happy in those arms, feeling that infinite sense of trust and triumph and security by which alone true love can be gauged. Isabel said to me afterwards in her satirical way that my head rested almost upon his shoulder, and that my fair hair contrasted nicely with the shining epaulettes and blue uniform of the Alpine Regiment! What did it matter?

At last he brought me back to my place with the Princess Colonna and Isabel, to whom the Princess formally introduced him. He was a Venetian noble of ancient line; his grandfather had been a great favourite of Ferdinand of Austria, and later of Franz Josef, who made him a Privy Councillor and Governor of Dalmatia, with the gift of a princely title. This, however, the family had abandoned after the death of the old gentleman, as the Austrian dominion in Italy came to an end about that time. They returned to the simpler title of “Nobile Venito,” which is, however, regarded as the equivalent of Prince in Italian society. His mother was the great-granddaughter of the

last Margrave of the Tyrol, and was of Norse descent ; from there, apparently, my young officer had inherited his blond hair and blue eyes. He looked to me more like a handsome young Irish boy than anything else I could think of, and he was certainly just as wilful and persuasive ! How I wondered when and where I should meet him again !

CHAPTER XXVI

1886-87

A meeting in the Coliseum. A romantic betrothal. Reproaches from England. Adventures at Capri.

THAT evening, a great feast was held at the house of Prince Massimo. He was the hereditary "Lord of the Holy Doorstep," one of the highest titles in all Italy, since it assumes personal guardianship of the Pope himself, and so the entertainment was crowded with all the noblest families in the country. The Princess was of the house of the Parma Bourbons, so she was my own distant cousin. The feast was a sumptuous affair, in keeping with the traditions of the family, who were directly descended from the later Roman emperors.

Two Cardinals were present, having been escorted by twelve "fire-runners" bearing torches, and coming themselves in the famous coach with the scarlet umbrella which received such veneration in the city of Rome. They left, as was usual, as soon as the dancing began; but before that time we had all been talking about the reported appearance in the Coliseum to a party of English titled ladies of the ghosts of some Roman soldiers, who appeared to be guarding a spectre that could have been none other than the wicked Emperor Nero. The Cardinals, as befitted their office, cast doubts on the story, but the rest of us were interested in it, for it was then the talk of all Rome.

Someone suddenly suggested that we should go ourselves and try to find the ghosts. The motion received no approval from the Church, but most of the younger members of the assembly were delighted at the idea, and so, about half an hour before midnight, we found our cloaks and sallied forth

in search of the supernatural. Arrangements were made to get into the enclosure, for there are few forbidden spots where authority and coin together may not penetrate ; and once inside, each of us took his or her own route, searching for Nero among the long, menacing shadows.

Thus it happened that, in a few moments, I found myself alone, looking in the moonlight rather like an apparition myself, with my tall figure and long white cloak. Meanwhile, a trio of very famous northern poets, Bjornsteyn Bjornsen, Hendrik Ibsen and Holgu Drachman, having seen the red light of torches moving about inside the vast Coliseum as they passed in the street without, and themselves recalling the English ladies' story, made their way inside after us. Bjornsen separated from his companions, and suddenly he saw me before him. I was sitting on a fallen marble statue ; the uncertain moonlight and shadow showed elusively on my white mantle ; it was that “ witching hour when churchyards yawn ” ; in short, he thought that he, too, had seen a ghost.

As he stood there, startled and silent, I knew him at once, from the many pictures and paintings I had seen of him, for he was more famous in the north than Ibsen, and I could not resist the temptation to greet him in Norwegian and to recite in a low voice an apt verse from one of his own poems.

His astonishment bereft him of breath, and then he whispered in Norwegian : “ Who art thou, maid, who speaketh in the tongue of Freya and the Heroes, while the fire of the South sparkles in thine eyes ? Art an embodied spirit haunting these ancient shadows—a fugitive goddess from the slopes of Mount Olympus ? ”

I laughingly assured him that I was a simple maid, daughter of the dust and no Immortal, who had often admired his wonderful poetry ; but he then besought me not to call him back from dreamland, for he had always wished to meet an Immortal in the flesh. We talked for a time, comparing the inspiration of the North with that of the South, and then he rejoined Ibsen, who had come to search for him. Often, in later years, when I met him, he recalled that first meeting, and would say : “ At times you escape my



Elfelt, Copenhagen

Princess Marie d'Orleans Chartres, the Author's cousin and best friend, who married Queen Alexandra's brother, Prince Waldemar of Denmark.

perception of the material form, and become again the fugitive goddess dwelling among the proud ruins of the Coliseum.”

We left Rome next day, going aboard the yacht of the Colonnas, which conveyed us direct to Messina. We arrived in the early morning, to find that the man-of-war which was transporting the Alpine Regiment had berthed a few hours before us. That evening, the Colonel commanding the fort, gave a great ball to the regiment, and our party was urgently invited.

The first man I met at that ball was Lieutenant Trombetti, who had so adroitly introduced himself to me in the cotillion at Rome. He came up to me now, seeking all the dances which I had still available, and excusing himself for not having called on us in Rome, as he could not discover where we were staying in the very short time before his ship sailed.

We sat out that evening more than we danced. If I had doubted before, I knew on this my second meeting that this was the man I loved, and that my deep affection for the future King of England (as the Duke of Clarence was then, of course, considered) had been, as I had always believed it to be, a strong and sisterly esteem for a very dear friend and former playmate, who was also one of the most charming men I have ever met—and I have met many.

My cavalier and I spoke but little ; it seemed that we had known each other always, and had little need of words who could sympathise so perfectly in thought. When we did talk, we spoke seriously, not having time for the usual graceful badinage and compliment which was then customary to some extent on the occasion of such festivities. He asked me for a promise that I would not leave Italy till he returned from his African service. He sought no more in words, but his wonderful eyes asked much more, and he understood his reply. I gave him a rose from my bouquet, and when I dropped my handkerchief—perhaps not unintentionally—he begged to be allowed to keep that, too. Such things happened in those days ; promises were sacred, and simplicity and sincerity had not yet lost their meaning. I have been told that in these more enlightened times they

would be sneered at and considered unmeaning and childish. Perhaps it is so ; I am too old to understand.

Next morning I found awaiting me a bouquet of Alpine eidelweiss and blush roses. At ten o'clock the fort guns thundered a salute, the man-of-war answered it, the Royal Standard was run up and dipped three times, we waved with handkerchiefs and fans, and the music of the band on board the warship grew faint and died away across the sunlit water. A new episode in my life had begun with a parting.

A letter had followed me from Paris, and until then I could not summon up courage enough to open it. I knew what it would contain, and I was not mistaken. The bitterest reproaches for my “cowardice” in fleeing from Paris before he could see me again, phrases hastily written under the stress of the deepest of all human emotions, and to end them a heartbroken appeal to me to return. It cost me many bitter tears, that letter of accusation from one who had always been so dear a friend, but I could only answer in those set phrases which again and again have brought the happiness of Kings crashing in the dust about them—“impossible . . . impolitic . . . a childhood dream which life must banish for ever. . . .”

I find it hard to tell here how sorrowful I became at the thought that my new-found happiness was to be marred by the suffering and pain of others. It would have been worse than cruel to be anything other than definite in my reply, but it was very hard for me to face the merciless decrees of destiny all alone. I became seriously ill with inflammation of the brain, developing into typhus fever, and for over three weeks I hovered between life and death. Then my naturally strong constitution asserted itself, and I grew slowly better.” For several months I could not comfortably speak above a whisper and my singing voice I never recovered ; perhaps it was a sacrifice on the altar of friendship. The vocal cords had been ruined ; but anyway I had no heart to sing the old songs again—they were too instinct with memories. As soon as I was well enough, I was sent by my physicians to Capri.

Since Roman times Capri has been the playground of the world. Everyone goes there at some time. An old inhabitant with whom we became acquainted because he was useful to us as a guide during our stay was Colonel McGovern, a Southerner who had left America after the Civil War because, in his opinion, the country had gone irretrievably to the dogs under the victors' regime. He was an old libertine, but very clever and in many ways most interesting, and he was the acknowledged head of the English and American colony at Capri. He always said that he never needed to leave the place because visitors kept him entirely *au fait* with fashionable news and all his friends came to the Island periodically from the various Courts of Europe.

During our stay in the place, members of our party took walks every morning to get to know the country, and we often climbed the hill to the Palace of Tiberius, to look at the ruins and admire the magnificent view, which is one of the best in the Mediterranean. For refreshment we turned into a small café for vermuth and biscuits. This café was a notable feature of the Island, being patronised by all the distinguished visitors; the proprietor was a very old woman, who had conceived the idea of attracting custom by beating the tambourine while the younger members of her staff danced the tarantella in proper native fashion. This dance is one supposed to be caused by the bite of the tarantula spider, which causes a madness in which the victim goes on dancing till he falls dead.

One morning when we arrived the poor old dame was in floods of tears. She had, it seemed, damaged three fingers of her right hand very badly, and could not play her instrument, yet at any moment was expected to entertain a party of Grande Signore who were coming especially to see the famous performance of the tarantella. “I am ruined! I am lost!” she exclaimed, wringing her injured fingers.

“Don't be alarmed,” I said laughing, “but give me the tambourine; I can perform quite well enough on it for your purpose; produce your dancers, let me hide behind that door, and all shall be well.”

The old lady was absolutely overcome at my suggestion, but I managed to persuade her that I did not mind helping her, and so in due time I was ensconced in my hiding-place when I heard a party of Germans enter. The performers were already in their places ; the music began to throb and tap ; the youths and girls danced with maddened vigour, and a tremendous round of applause and exclamation brought the display to a close, for the Germans were as openly enthusiastic as only German travellers can be.

I was still sitting in hiding with the instrument on my knees, when a tall, handsome young Teuton appeared suddenly round the door in front of me and poured a generous handful of coins in my lap. As he stood looking at me, the blood came suddenly to his cheeks, and in pitiable confusion he backed rapidly out of sight !

That evening, at dinner at our hotel, I saw him enter at the head of a German party, obviously the same as that which had watched the tarantella that morning. By some coincidence he looked across and found my eyes on him, and during the meal he several times glanced uneasily at me. Afterwards he obtained an introduction to me, and proved to be the Prince von Schmetterling. He could hardly find enough excuses, though I assured him that I felt no offence whatever at his action of the morning.

Finally, I persuaded him to laugh at the whole affair, and later, when the dancing had commenced, I stepped the tarantella with him, teaching him the society version of that difficult dance, which he picked up amazingly quickly and accurately. But then he was an Uhlan officer, and they were in those days the best dancers even in the brilliant German Army.

CHAPTER XXVII

1887-90

I leave Capri. Adventures on Lake Maggiore. On an American flagship. Stories of the Hofburg. An epicure's delight.

WE had arranged to take a villa for the greater part of our stay in Capri, and as soon as it was prepared we left the hotel and were very glad to experience greater quiet and peace than the fashionable hotel could provide. The house we took was built on the site of a Greek villa of two thousand years earlier, whose foundations supported the present structure. The ground floor was built right into the mountain-side, and was occupied by the owner and his pigs and goats. Our apartments, which were on the first floor, opened on to a wonderful garden and looked out over a magnificent view, nor were we incommoded by the dwellers beneath. They had their own entrance, and their apartment was kept spotlessly clean, and furnished with dry laurel leaves and sweet-smelling herbs which were changed daily.

Our kitchen was under the supervision of Lady Randolph Churchill, and directed by a splendid Italian chef. Lady Randolph was herself a clever cook, as so many Victorian titled persons were, and she often prepared for us culinary rarities which even the chef could hardly have produced.

The Archduke Ranese of Austria came to the Island with his two daughters, and we repeated many of our excursions in order to show them about the place. They brought us in exchange all sorts of interesting news from the outside world, telling us among other things of the enthusiasm with which my friend the Empress of Austria was being received in Ireland.

A little later, an old friend came to visit us—the Count Riva Palazore, Colonel of the Messina fort. He stayed with us for a few days, and told us of the great disaster at Aba Garima, where several thousands of officers and men, the flower of the Italian Army, had lost their lives through treachery. He took me aside from the rest and informed me gently that Lieutenant Trombetti had been dangerously wounded during the attack, but that as far as was known he was progressing favourably.

The Count spoke so feelingly and sympathetically that I took a sudden decision. Evidently he had noticed more than we had supposed on the night of the farewell ball ; he was a very old friend of my family ; and I asked him for his advice. I told him that I was not actually engaged to the Lieutenant, but that I had assured him I would not leave Italy till his return from Africa. On the other hand, our party was shortly breaking up, my sister Isabel being about to take the veil and Lady Randolph shortly returning by Royal command to England, so that I should be left all alone if I kept my promise.

The Count was most kind and understanding. “ I have an aunt,” he said, “ the widow of a famous Austrian Field-Marshal of the time of the Dominion of Italy. She is a most interesting woman—a grande dame of the ‘ancien régime,’ and as she has no children of her own and lives rather a lonely life, she would, I know, most warmly welcome you at her villa on Lago Maggiore, and act as your chaperone until such time as the young man returns and other plans can be made. I will speak to her about it and let you know.”

While the Count was waiting to hear from his aunt, we received an invitation to spend a few days aboard the splendid yacht of the Marchesa Ungaro. Invitations were also extended to the Count and to the Archduke and his daughters, and in their company we visited all the most beautiful places within easy reach by sea of Capri—Torento, Amalfi, Ischa, and the rest of the beauty spots of the Bay of Naples.

Lady Randolph wished to stay over the fourth of July before returning to England, for she was a true American,

and wanted to keep Independence Day with Colonel McGovern. A splendid luncheon was arranged on the roof of his villa, over fifty distinguished guests attending, and the proceedings ending with a firework display which lasted till the sun rose over the waters of the Bay.

Two days later our party really broke up. My sister was installed at the Convent of the Sacred Heart as a Novice, Lady Randolph left for Milan accompanied by the Count, and Mary de Marigny joined me in a visit to the American warship, *Cincinnati*. It was the flagship of a United States fleet then visiting Italy, and its Admiral was the famous American sailor, le Roy, who had married Caroline Bisby, daughter of the General of that name who was the friend and adviser of President Hayes. We spent a happy week aboard the battleship, and found it a most novel and thrilling experience. Caroline, who was one of our friends from American days, gave a great ball on the third day of our stay, and the huge grey vessel, gaily lighted from end to end, hung with bunting and decorated with flowers, made one of the most effective pictures I have ever seen. All the Italian warships which escorted the Americans were lighted, too, and the Bay twinkled from side to side, and echoed with the laughing music of military and naval bands.

Before going north to Maggiore, I wished to call on my distant cousins, Don Carlos of Spain and his Consort, who were staying then at their palace near Viareggio, and Caroline accompanied me thither, with Mary and the Admiral. We were most kindly received at Don Carlos's Court, and found much to interest us in the ancient palace building and its gardens, which then were famous throughout Italy, and indeed throughout the world. The daughters of the house were now grown up, and Elvira de Bourbon was of so striking a beauty that it was difficult not to forget one's etiquette in the desire to watch the play of expression over her lovely face. She was undoubtedly one of the greatest beauties who has ever lived.

Treaties were already going on for her marriage with the Crown Prince of Italy, and it was whispered that Cardinal Rampolli had all but succeeded in winning the reluctant

consent of the Pope to the union, despite the frantic opposition of the all-powerful Curia of Cardinals who put their whole powers against the scheme. It was immediately after this that the great sensation occurred which caused Don Carlos to announce publicly to his assembled Court : “ My daughter Elvira is dead ! ” and it occurred opportunely to prevent a marriage which the Papal authorities generally wanted to prevent. A pity for her that she was not dead in reality, as I shall tell later. It was then, of course, only a very short while after the great rift had occurred in Italy between Church and State which resulted in the Holy See absolutely prohibiting the marriage of any Catholic Princess to the heir of that Royal House which had stripped the Vatican of so much of its terrestrial power, and Elvira's readiness to flout this prohibition coincided with the beginning of the tragedy which ruined her brilliant young life.

A few days later I went up to Maccagno, on Lake Maggiore, where I was to stay with the Baroness von Westegg, the Count Riva Palazore's aunt, who had written to say that she would be charmed if I would stay awhile with her. Lady Randolph and Mary de Marigny came to see me comfortably installed there, and then Mary left for the States and Lady Randolph returned to England, where, by command of Queen Victoria, she was reconciled to her erring husband—a reconciliation which lasted, by the way, just as long as might have been expected !

The Baroness was a charming and high-spirited old lady, and had been in her time a fêted beauty of the Austrian Court, of which she was brimming with piquant stories. When I first met her, she was well over seventy, but quite failed to realise the fact, and dressed and acted like a shy young girl of twenty. She was excessively tall and gaunt, her eyes, once lustrous and dark, were now hollow, with but rare sparks of life, the nose that had been so delicately moulded was now for all the world like the beak of a superannuated parrot, her voice was deep and as hollow as the echo of a tomb, and, as that was before the time of the universal acquirement of artificial teeth, she faithfully cultivated the only two of her own which were still left her ;

they were upper jaw canines, and as they were unusually long, they were always in view, even at the most solemn moments. Yet despite all this, she was full of life and laughter, and in her company it was almost impossible to experience a single dull moment.

She must have told me hundreds of stories about her Court life, and her adventures with the old Field-Marshal. Once, when she was invited to a private dinner at the Hofburg, which dinner preceded a grand reception, she felt one of her shoes hurting her, so she quietly slipped it off beneath the table. Here, however, she had reckoned without her host, or more accurately, without the Empress's dogs. One of these pampered little spaniels found the slipper, gleefully carried it off and made a meal of it. When the Baroness rose from the table, the Empress noticed that she was lame, and considerately asked the cause—she could not, of course, see beneath the Court skirts of the time. The explanation caused a good laugh, and when the ruins of the slipper were discovered, the Empress put a pair of her own shoes at the disposal of her guest. The Baroness never forgot to add that the Royal slippers were too large, and that she could not dance, though of course she could not put it that way to the Empress, and had to plead a headache.

Another of her stories concerned her late husband, the Field-Marshal. During the time that he commanded one of the great Italian frontier forts, he managed to obtain the services of a famous Italian chef, and became very proud indeed of his capture, for the old soldier was a notable gourmand. He boasted to all his friends of this treasure, and one day he invited a numerous party to dine with him, and see for themselves what a wonder the man was in the art of cooking.

The chef prepared for that dinner a certain jelly for which he was justly noted, and this rarity was put in the cellar to cool ready for table. There, however, innumerable black-beetles discovered it, and speedily burrowed their way into it, after the manner of their kind, so that the jelly set around their gorging forms. When at the last moment the jelly was brought from the cellars, the catastrophe was discovered

in the kitchen, but it was then too late for any substitute to be offered ; nor would any of the servants risk telling their master what had happened, for he had been boasting particularly of this jelly to his friends. Also, the chef, like all other Italians of the time, bitterly hated the Austrian yoke, and he argued that if he was to be hanged (as would probably happen, for under Austrian dominion, Italian lives were taken cheaply enough), he might as well display the horrible jelly before all the guests as die merely for making excuses at his failure to present it.

The jelly was duly served, and the chef went to his own room and locked himself in there, intending to cut his throat. But no reprimand came immediately, and when next morning, having slept on his decision, he was sent for by the Field-Marshal, he decided to take his chance after all. Trembling, he crept into the old man's presence.

“ Understand, you,” said the Field-Marshal in the broken Italian which at any other time would have caused the chef to suppress a smile, “ the jelly you served yesterday was not satisfactory. Next time you put those little black savouries in it, see that they are better done. I found mine a little uncooked yesterday. Go ! ”

He went.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1890

A rebuke to the tourists. A troublesome suitor. A formal engagement.
A faithful friar.

EVEN in those distant days, the American tourist menace was threatening Europe with the submergence of good manners and courtesy, and during my stay on Lake Maggiore I met my first instance of the more vulgar American traveller. I had invited the Duchess Crevelli-Terbelloni and Countess Chicogni and her daughter to take lunch with me at a little hotel in Maccagno Superieur which was famous for its wonderful chef, and we were sitting out on a large open terrace when a party of very nasal and aggressive persons took up a position at a neighbouring table. The old Baroness von Westegg, who was with us, was wearing a Dolly Vardon silk frock, with a rosebud pattern, and a large hat *à la coquette* with peacock feathers, and this garb attracted the notice of the travellers, who made a number of loud and vulgar remarks about her and laughed almost in her very face, not expecting that we who looked like Italians would understand their words, even if we were disgusted by their behaviour.

As hostess, I could not permit this sort of thing to continue, so I said aloud in English to the Baroness : "Don't you think, Baroness, it is disgusting what a number of underbred persons there are travelling nowadays, who by airing their own ill manners bring discredit on their country ! "

The American party grew very suddenly subdued, and left almost at once without waiting for dessert and coffee. Fortunately the Baroness was blissfully unaware of what had

passed, as she did not understand English, and I was able to dismiss my remark in that tongue by saying it was a mere *lapsus linguae*.

A young man, a close relation of the Baroness, decided at this time to pay me the most marked attention, imagining that he was very desperately in love with me. According to Italian custom, he asked the Baroness to speak to me in his favour, and I have certainly never known a more persistent advocate. I became absolutely fatigued with her determination to marry me off, and told her candidly that I considered myself engaged already. She replied that I was not bound at all, having made no verbal promise ; she flaunted before me the attractions and riches of the young man of her choice, and finally told me roundly that I was a fool to throw away such a splendid chance of a matrimonial alliance as I had to admit he offered. I assured her that I had my own ideas about the sanctity of my understanding with Lieutenant Trombetti, and moreover that I had already let slip away from me even more advantageous opportunities in this direction, since I had fully intended from my youth to marry for love and for nothing else.

One morning at eight o'clock, she carried her solicitations a step further. She came into my room before I had risen, planted herself firmly between me and the bell so that I could not ring for the assistance of the invaluable Emelie, and stayed there for two hours arguing and pleading with me with such persistency that I was beside myself with exasperation. Luckily for me, she had to go out to keep an appointment later in the morning ; I had decided that I could not stay and enjoy her hospitality longer lest she discovered some even worse way of laying siege to my heart. While she was out, Emelie hurriedly packed my trunks and chartered a boat, and away we went to Maccagno Superieur where I had friends who would give me two or three comfortable rooms—and peace !

When the Baroness returned the bird had flown, and the hopes of the young nephew were at an end. She was angry with me for a time, but her irrepressible good-nature triumphed, she saw what cause she had given me for wishing

to leave her, and finally she accepted my excuses and became once more my very good friend.

Lieutenant Trombetti commenced to write to me now quite frequently, and sent his brother as representative of the family to ask me formally in marriage, according to Italian etiquette. We had met but twice, and on both occasions at great public functions, but when the heart speaks, time does not matter. I gave my consent with a joyous heart.

My fiancé by this time was recovering from his dangerous wounds and the illness which followed them, and he expected soon to be able to travel; the time of his African service was almost at an end; our reunion was at hand. Often I used to wander along the shores of the bluest lake in all the world, dreaming of him and of our happy life ahead.

I passed the winter very quietly, occupied with books and correspondence and needlework. In the evenings, I held a sort of class composed of local girls and women for the purpose of unearthing local lore and legend, and a most interesting task I found it. During this stay it was that I gathered much of the Italian folk-lore which served so well later when I became Councillor of Count Guberati's Folk-Lore League, which did so much to stimulate the modern Italian interest in national traditions which is a hall-mark of the country to-day.

A legend was told me then of a great king of the Norsemen who came with his queen many centuries before on a pilgrimage to Rome. He passed through Maccagno Superieur and rested at a nearby convent of the White Sisters, after having scaled the Pass of St. Gothard on his journey. He had given great gifts to the convent, the building of which was later sacked and destroyed by Napoleon, who drove away the pious Sisters and used the place as a military post.

One of the king's gifts was a great golden crucifix, so heavily set with precious stones that two friars had to support the arms of the celebrating priest when he raised it on high in the act of benediction. In course of time, the famous robber clan of Monte Genero, who had built a castle on an island opposite the convent, came to hear of this wonderful relic, but could by no means discover where it

had been hidden by the guardian friars. They took prisoner one of the holy men whose office it was to keep the crucifix clean and safe, and, because he would not tell them where it was hidden, they first tortured him and then built him living into a wall of their stronghold, leaving a small aperture before his mouth through which he could breathe and be fed. There he stayed for eighteen years ; and as he still steadfastly refused to give up his secret, they closed the hole for ever.

About 1860, in order to test the truth of this grim legend, the piece of wall in which he was said to have been hidden was taken down. Inside it was a skeleton, fastened at wrists and ankles by massive, rusty chains and iron staples. A length of that chain was brought to me, and I have it yet.

The singular points of similarity between the legends about the Norse king who gave the wonderful crucifix and the warrior Eric Ejegod, caused me to correspond with the Danish Court historians on the matter, and eventually we discovered a contemporary Saga which actually told of the king's rest at the convent and of his splendid gift. The story was also partly confirmed by my friend, Sir Charles Oman, of Oxford University, who by reference to the ancient documents available in England about the travels of St. Anselm, the great Archbishop of Canterbury, was able to confirm that a meeting took place at Maccagno between the Northern pilgrim and the English churchman.

The site of the convent of the White Sisters at once occurred to me as the perfect site for that monument which Albert Victor and I had agreed to erect in memory of King Eric, but that time was not a prudent one for me to communicate my design to the youth with whom I had so often and so enthusiastically discussed the project. I had not communicated with him since before my illness, and I did not wish to open old wounds on either side. So I decided to wait, meanwhile making excursions in the neighbourhood of Maccagno Superieur to consider how I could best further the practical side of my plans.

CHAPTER XXIX

1891-93

Isabel takes the veil. An English wedding. Death of the Duke of Clarence. With the Poet Queen of Roumania. An English Pilgrimage to Rome. A Royal Silver Wedding. The Kaiser visits the Vatican. The Pope and the newspaper.

WHEN at last my betrothed returned from Africa, he was still very weak and ill and unable to move, and he wrote begging me not to come to him at once, as I had so desired to do, because he could not bear me to see him so helpless and emaciated who had once been so strong and handsome. His family added their plea to his, for they knew his sensitive spirit, and so I had to postpone that happy meeting still longer. The waiting time was lightened, however, by his letters ; he was the most beautiful letter-writer I have ever known, his written words being the echo of his speech and thoughts—and remember I lived in an era when writing letters was a great art, which it certainly is not nowadays.

During that summer, while I was still awaiting a call from my betrothed, I had to go to Rome, to attend the investiture of my sister Isabel in the Convent of the Sacred Heart. She had, at last, put away from her all the pomps and gaieties to which our birth entitled us ; she was to become the Bride of Heaven almost at the same time as I was to become the bride of my beloved. I could not help comparing our states a little wonderingly, as I stood through the beautiful and solemn ceremony, and watched her there before me looking so serene and happy ; I wept as if my heart would break as the cruel scissors sheared through that wonderful hair of which she had always been so proud ; it seemed that all her

haughty disdain fell to the ground with those gleaming locks, and she stood dreaming and smiling with the seal of Heaven's peace on her pale, calm face.

I stayed at the convent till October, and then returned to Maccagno to receive my own bridegroom. He came seeking me gladly, with the warmth of sunlight in his laughter, all traces of his months of hardship and illness swept away.

All sorts of legal matters had to be settled before the actual ceremony could take place. Half the world must be searched for documents relating to my birth, the various lines of my royal ancestry and the details of my exact legal and territorial rights and privileges. A legal as well as a religious marriage was made necessary by my rank and on account of the difficulties then existent between the Catholic Church and the State in Italy and elsewhere, and matters were made more difficult by the fact that my nearest living relative, the Princess Jeanne d'Orleans de la Graviere, had laid down the condition that I must not appear before any magistrate or ordinary civil authority, since according to her strict religious views that would have made a mockery of the holy sacrament of marriage.

In the end we decided to be married in England, where greater tolerance is permitted ; and we were made man and wife at the church of St. Mary Magdalene at Brighton, which was then the most fashionable place for society weddings. The Catholic Bishop of London, Cardinal Vaughan, was the presiding priest ; he has since become famous as the Archbishop of Westminster. I wore a white satin dress with my family arms hand-embroidered in front, a white and silver-brocaded train, and the wonderful lace veil in which the martyr Queen Marie Antoinette had been wedded, and which was, of course, a family heirloom.

It had been intended to place my husband at the Italian Embassy at St. James's as Military Attaché, in place of his cousin who was then there, but the English climate did not suit him, a severe relapse was threatened, and he was forced to return to Italy on a prolonged leave. We made our home, after a Swiss honeymoon, at Magadino, in the Meschini Palace, which was leased to us by the proprietor of a

famous London hotel. We led a dream existence, rowing on Lake Maggiore, taking excursions into the nearby Alps, wandering in our glorious gardens and entertaining a few intimate friends.

That autumn came the news of the official betrothal of the Duke of Clarence, which was announced by command of Queen Victoria. Many comments were made on this engagement, which was said to be against the desire of both the principals ; it was indeed a matter of surprise in well-informed circles because it was generally believed that Princess Mary of Teck was in love with the Duke's younger brother, the handsome sailor Prince George. On the other hand, Her Majesty had never concealed the fact that she considered that political welfare must in the case of princes be put before personal desires.

We spent a very quiet Christmas at Magadino, and then, just after the New Year, the news came like a thunderclap of the death of the Duke of Clarence. Nothing was less expected ; few things could have brought me greater sorrow than this tragic loss of my childhood friend and companion.

A little later the poet Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva, wrote begging me to come to stay with her for a while. She had been ordered by her doctors to retire for a time from her Royal duties and live in absolute quiet and repose, for her health was failing, and she had consequently taken a villa at Pallanza. She was always one of my closest friends, and we had a mutual interest in the folk-lore and legends of the world. She persuaded me to sit day after day at her bedside and tell her all about the Folk-Lore Renaissance movement which had just been started in Italy by Count Gubernati, Sanskrit Professor at the University of Rome, and under the direct patronage of Queen Margherita, the first Queen of United Italy. Queen Carmen Sylva, who hated to show signs of her already considerable sufferings, used to lie on her bed, wonderfully decked in costumes of ancient romance or of the Far East, and so magnificently embroidered in gold and silver and decorated with priceless stones that she looked at times like a recumbent and begemmed idol.

She made me read a number of my own compositions in verse dealing with the traditions of the local countryside, and in return, despite her overpowering fatigue and pain, she insisted on reciting verses of her own, composed in the tongue of her adopted country and which I could therefore only half understand, as I had never completed the course of lessons in Roumanian which, at her persuasion, I had commenced some years before. I could get enough of the meaning, however, to find her beautiful and poetic imageries in cruel contrast to the agonised face and tired hurt voice of the reciter.

She was deeply interested and enthusiastic over correspondence which I was then holding with the Danish Court to arrange for a betrothal between the Italian Crown Prince and Princess Louise of Denmark, the daughter of Frederick VIII. This project was warmly supported by my cousin, Princess Marie, but came to nothing on account of the unyielding opposition of the old Queen Louise against her daughter marrying a Catholic.

My husband came to Pallanza to escort me back to our home, and on the way we stayed for a few days with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Archbishop Benson) and his mother, who had taken a nearby villa for the season. Manners there were hopelessly gauche and bourgeois, good-natured and vulgar. Mrs. Benson frequently appeared in a vivid purple gown of poplin, with very long sleeves and cut shorter at the back than at the front ; Mrs. Capel Cure and others of the ladies present adorned themselves in similar strange wear, and my Parisian eau-de-nil satin seemed almost improperly fashionable in contrast !

On our return home I found awaiting me letters from the Duke of Norfolk, who begged me to assist him in his forthcoming great Pilgrimage of English, Scotch and Irish Catholics to Rome. My husband could not publicly take part in such a matter, because it was then impolitic for any officer to mix himself in the bitter quarrel between the Vatican and the State, but I gladly did what I could. Coming down from Switzerland in the special train which conveyed the pilgrims, we passed this place where I am now

writing, the Villa de Vere, and I confided to the Duke my half-made plans for raising there a memorial to King Eric Ejegod, as Albert Victor and I had vowed to do so many years ago. My villa was not then built, of course, but the place was marked by the ruins of the White Sisters' Convent of King Eric's time, and I proposed to build a fitting chapel there, which I have since done, where pilgrims to the Holy City may rest and worship and remember that great warrior of the high north who trod this path before them. The Duke was interested in the matter, and warmly declared that he would himself assist in its accomplishment. He never did so, and when, later, I wrote to the Dowager Duchess, she also would not lend her countenance to the matter.

The Royal Silver Wedding in Italy was the great social event of that spring. All the crowned heads of Europe were either present or were represented, for it was an historic occasion. I was then Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Margherita, and my husband was on duty representing the Alpine Regiment in the specially picked Guard of Honour at the Palace. The Queen asked me to come early, as she wanted me to be present at the reception of the German Emperor and Empress, knowing that I knew them well. The Kaiser was bringing a numerous suite, and also his State coaches, horses from his famous Potsdam stables, and all his stable staff, for he intended to wait upon the Pope during his visit, and at that time the Royal Italian coaches and servants with the Italian crown livery were refused admittance to the Vatican.

A considerable party of us went down to the station to greet the special train from Germany. Queen Margherita wore a green velvet gown and a toque with white feathers fastened by a jewelled Italian eagle with outspread wings. I was in white velvet with an heirloom brooch and in my hat a diamond clasp of the time of the Empress Josephine.

When the special train rumbled into the station five minutes behind its time, a salute of artillery thundered from St. Angelo and the waiting bands struck up "The Watch on the Rhine." The Kaiser jumped on to the platform while the

train was still moving, affectionately embraced King Humbert and was back again at the carriage door before the train had come absolutely to a standstill to assist the Kaiserin to step out on to the platform. The Queen of Italy then moved forward, surrounded by her ladies, the Kaiser with his inimitable grace bent low over her hand and greeted her in perfect Italian, to which she replied by a warm welcome in just as perfect German. Then the Queen had me presented and the Kaiser's face lighted with a smile as he saw me. “I promised that we should soon meet again when last I saw you at Charlottenberg,” he said.

The Kaiserin greeted us with that infinitely attractive smile for which her otherwise rather plain face was noted, but she did not look at her best. She was very hot and flushed, for the climate in Rome was much hotter than in Berlin, and in her dark blue gown and bonnet she looked somewhat confused and very fatigued after the shaking of the long train journey.

The cheers of the dense crowds which had gathered to welcome the Royal visitors were deafening and unceasing, a veritable rain of flowers fell all about us and on our dresses, we had to walk over a deep carpet of blooms as we returned to the Royal coaches, the bands, perfectly conducted, played a wonderful potpourri of German and Italian airs and the flags of the two nations hung from all the windows on the route to the Palace and were intertwined on long ropes and ribbons stretched across from side to side above our heads. The Imperial party had to show themselves three times on the Palace balcony, tired as they were, before the crowds would diminish their clamour, and even then intermittent cheering went on for an hour or more, for the Kaiser was always a personality that took men's hearts. Who would have dreamed then that not so many years ahead Germany and Italy would be locked in a death-grapple.

Banquets and festivals and State balls succeeded one another so speedily that there was scarce an hour's rest for any of us, while the Royal personages themselves found none at all. One little incident occurred at the grand reception given at the British Embassy, which showed rather vividly

that slight touch of the bourgeois which was so often apparent beneath the character of the Kaiserin—after all, only the daughter of a rather insignificant principality, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. As the guests were strolling leisurely about in the magnificent Embassy gardens, the Italian Prime Minister, Crispi, was enjoying a serious and important talk with a German statesman who had come unofficially in the Kaiser's suite. Suddenly a hand was stretched out between them and the two surprised men discovered the Kaiserin standing there. She had come up quite silently, alone and without the ceremonial announcement which was conventional ; her appearance gave the quite untrue impression that she had been eavesdropping on their political talk. Actually, she wanted to meet the great Crispi, and took the shortest route to her desire.

The gentlemen excused themselves profusely, Crispi bent low over her hand and said all the pretty things of which he was so notable a master, and the situation was discreetly smoothed over ; only an Italian politician could have managed it so adroitly.

A day or two after this came the great Imperial visit to the Vatican. In spite of his notable self-assurance, the Kaiser was a little uneasy at the prospect ; temporal sovereigns, he said, he knew how to deal with, but spiritual ones were quite another matter. He asked a good many questions here and there so that he might be perfectly posted with the exact ceremonial the Pope desired, and so that he could himself display all suitable reverence and Imperial dignity in the Holy Presence.

The Kaiser's party started from the German Embassy, where a throne was specially erected for the Royal couple, so that they might literally descend from this seat of earthly power as a symbol of submission. They left the throne and entered the German Imperial coaches ; but even by that time there were portents in the air of the clash of wills that was to follow. The Kaiserin, on the bidding of His Majesty, had had prepared for the Vatican visit an elaborate costume of white satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold, and a toque ornamented with a diamond dove with white

feathers in its beak. The day before the visit, however, the Kaiser's attention was officially called to the fact that according to Vatican etiquette, such ladies as were permitted to enter the Presence should be dressed in black, with a veil over the head and without gloves. The Kaiser insisted on the white toilet, and frantic couriers hurried back and forth between the Papal Palace and the German Embassy with protests and arguments. The Pope would not give way, however, and finally, as there was not time to prepare another toilet, the Kaiserin had to borrow a rather unimpressive black garment from one of her ladies-in-waiting, a veil was provided, and that very makeshift toilet had to do for the great occasion. The Kaiser was furious, but for once his will was not consulted. As a result of this incident and to prevent any repetition of it, it was brought to the notice of the other European Courts that white garments and toques were not permitted at Papal audiences.

When the German Royal pair arrived, the Pope was seated on his great throne, and he made no movement to rise to greet them as they slowly approached him. An arm-chair was placed for the Kaiser one step below the Papal throne, and one for the Kaiserin a further step below that ! After exchanging a few conventional phrases, the Kaiser rose with the intention of making the usual present—it was a golden snuff-box, which was the common form that such a gift was supposed to take. Instead, however, of putting it on the golden tray held up by the Papal chamberlain, the Kaiser wished to proffer it himself, and when he produced it, the exquisite little box was wrapped in a bit of newspaper—actually in a bit of newspaper ! Prince Massimo, Lord of the Holy Doorstep, was present, and told me afterwards of the “sensation that was caused.

The horrified Chamberlain jumped in front of the Kaiser, snatched at the snuff-box, and after a short struggle succeeded in dragging it from the Royal hand, while the Pope sat silently on his high throne. The box was then put on the golden tray and presented kneeling to His Holiness ; while the Kaiser, who was left foolishly gripping the historic

bit of newspaper, crushed it furiously into a ball and hurled it down on the floor ! At the great ceremonial leave-taking which followed, His Holiness never moved, and the Kaiser's face was dark with wrath.

When the German Royal suite had passed through the grand *salons* into the antechamber, the route they should have taken according to etiquette lay on their right, and was already lined with the famous Swiss Guards. But the Kaiser said loudly : “ No ! We will go this way ! ” and started down the corridor that lay straight before him. After passing through interminable galleries and passages and walking till the Kaiserin was thoroughly fatigued, the party reached the Brona Portal. Until then they had been left absolutely alone to continue their walk, but now they were told that this Portal could never be opened save when His Holiness went through it in procession to the Cathedral of St. Peter.

The Kaiser was now thoroughly roused, and ordered that the great gates must be opened ; but it was told him that Prince Massimo, who kept the keys, was at service and could not be disturbed, and moreover that the Pope would never grant such a privilege even to the greatest sovereign on earth. The party stood there in embarrassment and indecision, looking through the wonderfully wrought iron-work at the Imperial coaches with their interested grooms in the courtyard, till the Kaiser finally accepted the inevitable and decided to go back the way he had come.

The return journey took over a quarter of an hour, and was completed in dead silence.

CHAPTER XXX

1893-94

A telegram from Queen Margherita. With Princess Alexandra in Rome. A Royal party in the Alps. The Queen and the trousers. With the Kaiser at Venice. A visit to Switzerland.

AFTER this visit to Rome had been concluded, we returned to our lovely Alpine home and prepared to enjoy its quiet and solitude, but we had hardly been back a week when I received an urgent telegram from Queen Margherita. Our adored Princess Alexandra of Wales, heavily stricken in health by her grief for the death of her firstborn and favourite son, the Duke of Clarence, had been ordered by the Court physicians to take a tour in the Mediterranean on the *Victoria and Albert*. The yacht had anchored at Naples for a while, and the Princess travelled incognito to Rome to visit Queen Margherita. She specially asked that I should be sent for; and so I hurried South at once.

It was a sad meeting for us. I am afraid we both cried a good deal over our mutual memories of happy days in the high North, before the shadow of the iron hand of politics had fallen across our pleasant paths, but I endeavoured to comfort her, and we were always together during her stay in Rome. Then, as always, the Princess preferred to converse in her native Danish; we took expeditions together shopping, or sat quietly in the magnificent Palace gardens sewing and reading and talking, and enjoying those happy silences which only dear friends can indulge in without embarrassment.

When I returned to Magadino, spring had already decked the mountain-sides with eidelweiss, and we made many

delightful excursions into the wonderful nearby mountain valleys. Princess Jeanne d'Angoleme, my friend from our convent days, came to stay with us, and she and Mary de Marigny, my husband, my brother and myself spent an exciting day climbing one of the Alpine peaks near where we were staying.

We started at four o'clock in the morning, our bearers carrying lanterns, luggage, tents and provisions, and reached the top of Monte Tanero in time for lunch. We descended afterwards on the Italian side, and reached home again about midnight ; which was considered quite a record for lady climbers at that time, though the peak is by no means a formidable one.

A little later, my husband was recalled to his regiment for Alpine manœuvres, and I joined the party of my old friend the Princess Schwartzburg Rudolphstadt at her Merau villa. I found a most pleasant party assembled there, including Princess Terese von Donauroth, another old friend, and Queen Margherita. We were almost immediately joined by the Countess Morosina, my husband's cousin. She was then generally acknowledged as the reigning beauty of Venice (whose women are famed the world over for their looks), and she was reported to have made a great impression on the Kaiser on his visit to that town.

One afternoon, as we all sat at luncheon, overlooking one of Northern Italy's most famous gardens from our wide-windowed *salon*, Queen Margherita leaned over to our hostess and said in her sweet, insinuating way in Italian : “ I would so like to have that yellow pair of trousers for my room ; they are such a wonderful colour.” Everyone looked at her in astonishment, wondering which trousers were meant and why the Queen of Italy should want them ; we then realised that she was looking out at a magnificent bed of yellow tea-roses on the lawn, and had made a mistake which many people do in Italian of pronouncing an “ h ” before the initial “ r,” so that the word “ *rosen* ” became to our ears “ *hosen* ! ” Someone explained why we had all looked so surprised, and the Queen was the first to laugh

heartily at her own error, which she often recounted afterwards against herself.

Princess Schwartzburg Rudolphstadt had provided a company of Tyrolese minstrels to perform their peculiar music from boats on the lake before the house that night, while other Tyrolese in national costume performed some of their traditional dances by torchlight. It was a most delightful and memorable scene as the dancers glided to and fro in the red illumination, and the half-invisible boatmen beat out the rather uncanny measures.

On my way home again, I stopped for a short time in Venice, where the Kaiser had for some time had his yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, at anchor while he was feasted and feted by the noble descendants of the Doges of the city. The Countess Anna Morosina, who returned with me, entertained him several times at her ancient Palace, and was honoured by his especial friendship, for she was a brilliant wit as well as being a supreme beauty of the dark Italian type. After this visit, she never passed a birthday without receiving a long and most flattering telegram from the Kaiser, with whom she always thereafter kept up a keen intellectual friendship.

One evening, at one of her brilliant gatherings, I observed a strange-looking little man, who took no part in the general festivities, regarding me with minute closeness for some considerable time. His brilliant, hypnotic little eyes were on me every time I looked across at him, and finally he asked a friend of mine to introduce him. He was Alma-Tadema, the great Italian artist and designer, and one of the most acid critics of the fashions of higher society. He said to me quite calmly that he had been studying my ensemble ; I expected the usual severe criticism which he never feared to make ; but he said he had never seen such perfect blending of colour as my toilet displayed, that when he looked at my gown he could not think of a *modiste* for it resembled rather a cobweb with diamond dewdrops than a mere covering of cloth, and that “ the midsummer fairies under the direction of Fata Morgana herself must have fashioned it for me from the sunbeams and moonbeams

that are drowned deep in the blue of the Italian lakes ! ” I wrote down his words in my diary because I thought it the most original and poetic compliment I had ever heard passed even on a Paris toilet, and also because compliments from that source were a rarity indeed.

During this stay in Venice, I met for the first time the English novelist, Mrs. Humphry Ward. She seemed very self-conscious and modest—perhaps even too much so. On one occasion, when my husband's cousin, Princess Giovanelli, offered to conduct her personally through the world-famous family gallery, Mrs. Ward said that she really liked to have an experienced man to guide her ! The Princess did not repeat her offer. It was from this gallery that the wonderful painting, “The Tempest,” by Girondini, was loaned a short time ago for an exhibition of Italian art in London, being then valued at 15,000,000 lire. An interesting sequel is that the Prince was obliged by financial difficulties consequent on war losses to sell it a little while after this, but got only 5,000,000 lire for it from the Italian Government, who set their own price upon it and were protected from English or American competition by a law which forbids the sale of famous Italian works of art for export to other countries.

Until my husband had concluded his military manœuvres, I was to go to stay with his mother, the Countess Trombetti, at Verona. The old lady was the granddaughter of the last Margrave of the Tyrol, and her father was one of the greatest Tyrolese landowners—on one occasion a party from his Palace had hunted a great stag for three days without reaching the limits of his forests. He was, as I have said earlier in my story, a great favourite at the Austrian Court in the days of the Italian Dominion under Austrian rule, but the various titles conferred on him by Franz Josef were discarded at the liberation of Italy, and the old Italian rank of Nobile Venito resumed alone. It was, in many ways, a more noble title than any of the others, for even the Princes of Rome were descended from skin-clad shepherds and begging friars who afterwards made themselves popes and their relations minor kings ; while the Venetian nobility

sprang from the aristocracy of merchant princes who were famous centuries before as rulers of the richest and best-governed community in the world.

My mother-in-law, Countess Trombetti, was an old lady of most definite ideas. Until the time of which I am speaking, she had never been on a train, and looked on them with disfavour. When she had to go to Venice to attend her niece's wedding to Prince Giovanelli, she reached the station a full hour before the train was due, had a full parade of porters and officials and passed along their line cross-questioning each most severely as to whether the train would be perfectly up to time-table at its various stops *en route*, and warning them that she had the strongest objection to rail accidents and that she would visit all sorts of displeasure on their heads if an accident of any sort took place !

Agitated officials, headed by the gold-braided station-master, assured her that “ Your Excellency will be perfectly safe,” and at last she entered her carriage. The journey was unsatisfactory, however, and the Countess returned all the way to Verona in her exceedingly rumbling and ancient family coach, with innumerable teams of fresh horses awaiting her at various points on the road. On her way past the station, she marshalled the officials and severely rebuked them, and she never again used a train in her life.

At this wedding she wore a magnificent sable mantle reaching to the ground, and cut according to the style of fifty years before. She would not change its cut ; she argued that people would know that the furs were the same, and would only be amused at her pretending that they were new ones by altering the shape. She wore that historic mantle on her own honeymoon trip to Paris, which journey also she took by coach only : that proved, she said, that such vulgar things as railways were absolutely unnecessary in the world of travel.

I had only been at the Countess's Verona home for three days when I received a telegram saying that my husband had been seriously hurt in a mountaineering accident ; he had broken two ribs and dislocated a knee, and had suffered from

lying in a perilous position on the edge of a deep crevasse for some time till he could be rescued. When he was well enough, we went to Magadino, in Switzerland, where we had spent our honeymoon, and passed a happy autumn there, painting and shooting, accompanied by two great hounds from a hunting pack for the breeding of which his family had long been famous.

CHAPTER XXXI

1894-96

An Anti-crinoline Campaign. Lady Somerset's "Midnight Mission."
A convent funeral. A visit from the Duchess of Cumberland.

QUEEN MARGHERITA wrote to me just after my return to Magadino, asking me to use my influence in assisting the local researches of Count Gubernati's Folk-Lore League, which was under the Queen's patronage. Thus, in the unearthing of old legends and in other quiet homely pursuits, that lonely winter passed away.

In the following spring, a great new hope came to brighten still further the happy life of my consort and myself. He was the eldest son of a direct line of princely Venetian ancestry, and I, now that Isabel had taken the veil, was the only direct descendant of the warrior princes of Siena, as well as being connected with the Royal Orleans House of France. For these reasons, therefore, as well as because it would set a fresh and glorious seal on our great love, we looked forward eagerly to the new life which we hoped would so shortly join us.

Alas ! Just before the time when our bright hopes should have changed to wonderful reality, I went incautiously too near the edge of a fern-grown, mossy wall, and fell several feet on to a stone path beneath. A little later, the baby son for whom we had built such roseate dreams was born, before the doctors and nurses for whom urgent telegrams had been dispatched could arrive from Milan. He was perfect and lovely, but that flickering spirit could not stay with us ; seventeen hours later, almost before I had held him in my arms, the baby spirit went back along that mystic road

down which it had come, and we were left alone. Soon after we understood that our hopes could never now be realised ; and so it is that I, an old lady and the last living representative of all my ancient and glorious line, whose ancestors were saints and heroes and princes back to the very dawn of Christianity, am now sitting lonely here in my Italian villa, writing these last lines of our great record, so that when I, too, have returned to our Royal dust, there shall be left for the wondering world a final chapter to our history.

I was ill for some time after, and very sad for a long while, but my husband's infinite love and almost womanly tenderness and sympathy gave me courage to meet my destiny. For ever and for ever in this life and beyond the grave we knew by Divine assurance that we should have each other. God willed that that was all ; it was sufficient.

When I was well again, I found the society of all the world's great capitals just beginning to revolt against the tremendous and united endeavour which the great dress designers of Paris were making to bring back again the mode of the crinoline. It was an epic struggle—the makers of the fashions against the leaders of the fashions. There have been such incidents since, notably that of a few years ago, when the mode for undignified and abbreviated skirts was vanquished by the designers who ruled that garments of a more seemly length should return again. Modern society opposed that and failed ; we in our day succeeded.

Mrs. Stannard, better known in England as John Strange Winter, the famous author of *Bootle's Baby*, boldly took up the cudgels against this inartistic and uncomfortable antiquity of the crinoline, and started the “ No Crinoline League.” Princess Alexandra of Wales lent the League her patronage in no undecided manner ; she asked me to support the idea in Italy, and so I became the League Secretary here. Princess Alexandra wrote me at the time saying, “ I have been so annoyed by the ungainly crinoline in my earlier days that I personally will *never* consent to wear it again. So inartistic ; so absurd ; just look at the photographs of me in my wedding dress, for instance ! ”

I was assisted in the considerable correspondence of my

new position by a dear friend, Mrs. John Miller, the widow of a distinguished British naval officer. She had recently joined my suite ; she was a splendid linguist and exquisitely musical. One of her brothers-in-law in those days commanded the famous British training-ship, *Birkenhead*. In the correspondence we received in connection with the League, we met all sorts of most eccentric specimens of spelling and writing, sometimes from unexpectedly distinguished sources, more than confirming the general belief that not a fiftieth part of the Italian nation is able to write or speak correct Italian.

Lady Henry Somerset paid me a short visit at this time from England, on a propaganda tour for Purity and Temperance. She was most anxious for me to give my support to her "Midnight Mission," but I was rather doubtful of doing so. I sought the advice of Lord Dufferin, who had always been such a dear friend to me and whose advice had often guided me. His reply confirmed my own opinions. "There is something incongruous," he wrote, "in a young and beautiful woman taking an active part in such a movement—it seems hardly fitting. If you follow your beloved grandmother's example, and surround yourself with an atmosphere of purity and high principle, that example will be all that can be justly expected of you, and will have a wider influence than any other course of action." I followed his sage advice, and Lady Somerset went away very disappointed, abandoning Italy to its fate, which was just as well, for it is not an intemperate or immoral place, though its gaiety of spirit is sometimes mistaken in that way.

That autumn, my husband was recalled to his regiment, which was stationed at Varese. We went to occupy the centre pavilion of a great palace there erected by the ancient Ducal family of the Littas, about one of whose Duchesses and her rival I have already told a rather piquant story, and for the first time we furnished with our own belongings. A number of these came from my grandfather's villa on Lago Maggiore, which had been sold furnished many years before to an ancient and impecunious Italian family. They had omitted to pay a penny for it, but that was because they had

nothing with which to pay, and they were so charming and sweet about it all that we felt quite unable to urge the question—only we carried portions of the furniture away from time to time as we required it ! These historic pieces, added to what we had purchased or had had made, adequately furnished the wonderful palace which was our new headquarters.

Our grand *salon*, which was lighted by five great windows, was over seventy feet long, and gave on to a broad marble terrace and an exquisite and spacious Italian garden. There were nine magnificent magnolia trees outside the windows, and when these bloomed all the bedrooms had to be kept closed, as the scent was so heavy that otherwise the sleepers awoke with violent headaches.

Varese is a cosmopolitan city with a most mixed population and enjoys a permanent invasion from travellers of all nations and classes. It is the summer resort of Italian society, and during those months we had gay race-meetings and casino balls and receptions at the surrounding summer villas, while in winter we enjoyed a cosy family life brightened by visits from the officers of the nearby regiments and their families.

It was during this period of quiet enjoyment that I received a sudden telegram from Rome, saying that my sister Isabel lay dangerously ill at the Convent of the Sacred Heart. As speedily as trains could hurry me I went to Rome, but I was too late. She had died peacefully the evening before my arrival. She looked like a lovely, tranquil statue in white marble as she lay there in her long white robe, with the Rosary in her folded hands. I stayed for the funeral, at which the Cardinal Merry del Val officiated, Cardinal de Pietro pronouncing the absolution. Afterwards, as it is not conventional to mourn for a person in sacred orders, I wore garments of subdued colours for a short time, and stayed quietly in Rome for the remainder of the season.

In the following spring the Duchess of Cumberland came with her suite to Varese, and stayed for a time at the Hotel Excelsior. I called on her, but was never so intimate with her as with her sister, Princess Alexandra ; it happened that

she was never visiting Fredensborg when I was there, and she was not such a favourite with Princess Alexandra as were some of the other brothers and sisters of the Danish Royal House.

At this time, too, a pair of young Swedish ladies came to stay with me, one being the daughter of the Swedish Prime Minister, Bostrom, and the other the daughter of the Admiral-in-Chief of the Swedish Navy. A little further into the spring, I took these two lovely Northern maids to Venice to show them the City of the Lagoons, and afterwards to Isola Bella.

Later, when the Prime Minister had joined us with his other daughters, they proposed an expedition in the neighbourhood on a day when I felt indisposed to join them, so I arranged for their conduct by excellent native guides, which was easy enough, as I was distantly related to the Litta family and the local feudal spirit yet lived in those days. For myself, I had an arm-chair placed in the shade beside the fountain of the hotel where we were temporarily staying, and sat there quietly reading.

Once more I had an experience of the vulgar American tourist type. A nasal party came up, commenced to walk round me and stare and pass comments. “Say, boy, I bet she's a Big Bug all right ! Look at that dress ! There's the li'l ol' Paris touch—wouldn't I like one like it !” I bore this patiently, as it was a lazy afternoon ; and by and by an old English friend, Canon Mangles, who was *au fait* with everyone round the Lake and always to be seen when tea or an entertainment was toward, came bustling up and spoke to me in English. The Americans heard me reply, and then shame overcame even them and they melted away with a celerity I have seldom seen equalled.

One other trivial incident I remember about that visit. The Prime Minister was greatly bothered whenever he visited Milan by guide-sellers and vendors of oddments, who make a point of knowing all famous or rich visitors and plaguing them for custom in the streets. I told him to look at them in surprise and say, “Me go bisongi de nagatte !”—a vulgar Milanese dialectic way of saying, “I can't afford

anything.” The trick worked, as it always does, perfectly ; the hawkers could not believe that a famous Premier would answer in such a way or even know the local patois, and so they left his party alone and besieged other and less unlikely visitors. I commend the phrase to present-day tourists—it has its merits.

CHAPTER XXXII

1896-1900

Italian society *à la mode*. A Carnival ball. Wedding of the Crown Prince of Italy. Queen Margherita faces a storm.

WHEN my husband was promoted to the rank of Captain, we left Varese for Lodi, a very old-fashioned provincial town, and there I was initiated into the narrow-hearted intrigues of Italian country life. The initial calls that followed our change of abode, in which the civil authorities as well as the families of the officers of the district command and the garrison came to visit me, taught me a good deal.

Immense importance was attached to these calls. They all had to be made in the right order and at the appointed times, or deadly offence was given. It was the same in returning them. One mounted a dingy and narrow staircase, the door was opened by a maid in a starched apron big enough to make a double bed-sheet, one was conducted slowly through all the rooms the place contained in order to show them in their completeness, and finally, in a narrow and ill-lighted corner, introduced to the hostess. The guest of highest rank sat at her right hand, and all the other callers were seated on chairs around her, according to degree. When a new visitor came, there was a vast rustle, everyone rose, and a cackling and excitement ensued like the introduction of a new hen into a hencoop. " You sit there—no, *there!*—the Princess on the right of the sofa"—and so on. Then commenced questions about your health and that of all your relations up to the third and fourth generation, and it was customary to keep this important topic on the go till a new visitor arrived and the whole thing could be begun again.

In our new home we decided that we could entertain the young soldiers who were my husband's friends, for the place was most suitable in that way. It was a stately palace of a much earlier period of architecture, with a monumental staircase leading up to a great vestibule with a vaulted roof supported by splendid and generous marble columns. In the centre of the vestibule we arranged an arbour of flowering plants inside which the military bands could play for our dances and receptions. Our arrangements, our perfect servants gathered from all over the globe, and especially my carriages, caused a sensation in the quiet town ; the culminating thrill was when I had a victoria sent from England. It had rubber tyres, which luxury had then never been seen in the neighbourhood of Lodi, and caused great comment.

The most prominent of the local ladies was the Prefect's wife, and as she features later in this story, I had perhaps better describe her. She was literary, clever and acidly witty, but marred by a most domineering disposition. She began by trying to gain a sort of intimacy with me by means of flattery, which I disliked ; and when I refused to hob-nob with her, she used all her local influence against me. She had three rather skinny daughters to marry, and she was also most ambitious for her husband, who without her influence seemed rather unable to succeed for himself. Her chief friends were an immensely rich butcher and his wife who had made a fortune by supplying meat to the Army, and these people she wished to introduce to me. That, however, proved impossible, and at my refusal the Prefectess made herself my enemy.

My husband once had occasion in connection with his military duties to call on this butcher, and the wife herself opened the door. She was clad in a soiled old gown, wore a big dirty apron, but had in her ears diamonds as big as pigeon's eggs, which must have been worth a considerable fortune. She slammed the door when she saw who stood there, and was replaced later by a maid, what time the mistress herself changed into a costly but ill-fitting gown and marshalled the sickly compliments with which she was to receive the visitor. This incident it was that caused me

to persist in my refusal to receive Madame Butcher, and subsequently made the Prefectess imagine herself my rival !

One of her grievances was that, at the Opera, she found that the young officers present called on me before they visited her in the Royal box, to which she had a right as the wife of the civil authority. She complained to the General about it, and he had officially to support her, though, as a close friend of ours, he objected at having to endorse such an unpopular order among his staff. These gay young men at that time followed blindly in the steps of their two acknowledged leaders, Prince Louis Napoleon Buonaparte and Prince Guelph d'Arese, who were both serving as lieutenants in my husband's regiment, and who were his inseparable friends. These young lions were my devoted cavaliers and constant guests at the house, and in order to circumvent the order after all, they contrived accidentally always to be in the foyer when I arrived and to escort me in their capacity as friends to my box—after which they paid their official visit to the Prefectess. She complained again at this, but the General returned his regrets, and said he could not interfere in the private affairs of his staff and their friends.

At the first great carnival ball at Lodi, I attended with three young guests of mine who were acknowledged Court beauties, and we all naturally wore the somewhat pronounced *décolleté* of Parisian fashions of that period. The Prefectess and her daughters, however, let it be known that they considered our dress most improper, and that they themselves preferred a more decent garb—which, indeed, came well up to their chins. The effect of the intended rebuke was rather spoiled, however, by the undisguised opinion of the young officers present that the necessity which caused the higher bodices was not so much that of decency as of wisdom ! Prince Louis Napoleon, who was in the Prefectess's box when I and my party entered the ballroom, said casually to her, “ I see the Princess and her flower-garden.” An acid repartee was immediately forthcoming : “ You mean Mother Goose and her goslings ! Their *décolleté* is a perfect

scandal ! ” The Prince told my husband later that he wondered how geese could have managed to be improper in garb.

In the Prefectess's *salons* a perfect knowledge of French and English was *de rigueur*, and this led the unhappy lady to a further disaster. At a grand opera ball during the carnival, we decorated our box with British colours, sending to England for the actual bunting which had been used for the palace decorations at Queen Victoria's last Jubilee. Over the box we had a gigantic ribbon bearing the motto of the Garter, which we thought appropriate in view of the rather frequent remarks about our gowns, “ Honi soit qui mal y pense.” When the lady saw it, her somewhat saturnine face distinctly brightened, and she went about telling everyone that it was a pity we had not spelt “ honi ” with another “ n ! ” To say that the officers were delighted would be to put it mildly.

At this time all Italy was looking forward to the forthcoming marriage of the Crown Prince. It had once been intended that he should marry my cousin, Elvira de Bourbon. As I have said before, this scheme was opposed by all the power of the Curia of Cardinals, with the single exception of Cardinal Rampolli. This astute dignitary had almost succeeded in winning the consent of the Holy See, and there would then have been nothing in the way of an early marriage for the girl who was admittedly the loveliest Princess in all Europe, when the whole scheme was suddenly ruined by a most dramatic scandal. The news went speeding among the wide-eyed servants one morning in the Palace of the Thousand Windows that its young and beloved Princess had eloped with a penniless American artist who had been employed there for some weeks in the task of restoring some of its priceless art treasures ! It was on that morning that Don Carlos, the Spanish Pretender, called together his Court about him, and said brokenly : “ My daughter the Princess Elvira de Bourbon has died this night ! ”

The choice of a future Queen of Italy fell subsequently on Princess Helen of Montenegro, and she it is who sits on the Throne of Italy to-day. Her nation was then considered

as little more than a mountain tribe, though it has become quite famous since the War. The Italian Government fixed a dowry of a million lire upon its Crown Princess to be, to meet the expenses of her trousseau, since the Montenegrin exchequer would hardly have stood the strain.

The wedding was an occasion of great dignity, but it was not the spontaneous success that such festivals in Italy usually are. Not so many Royal representatives as usual attended, and the people were not nearly so joyous as had been expected.

During that summer I had constant visits from English friends, and Canon Mangles was perpetually to and fro taking tea with us and bringing with him friends of various religious orders. My visitors used to remonstrate with me for showing indiscriminate hospitality to these various sects, but I explained that I was not bigoted, and that I could respect the efforts of any sincere and believing heart to find God in its own way and place.

At one such clerical luncheon, Canon Mangles leaned over and said confidentially to me: “Do you know, Princess, what the English families around Maggiore always call you —the Lady of the Lake !”

I was pleased with the name and decided to adopt it, though for a purpose of my own. “It will do splendidly for my new six-oared rowing barge,” I replied, and we forthwith set out to christen it, for it had only been finished that morning and lay on the lake-side awaiting its maiden voyage. The Canon extemporised a little baptismal service suitable for the occasion, a bottle of champagne was broken over the bows, and the *Lady of the Lake* slid gracefully into the water. A Union Jack was run up, the family arms displayed on a flag in the stern, and the boat thereafter became one of my favourite possessions, not even being ousted from its supremacy later when we acquired a smart little electric launch.

I was to make at this time a call on the Dowager Duchess of Genoa, who had a villa at Stresa, having married again, after her husband's death, his former Master of Horse. Queen Margherita of Italy came to stay with her for a couple

of days, and asked me to travel with her from Lareno to Stresa, so that we could make our visit to the Duchess together. It happened that a storm was raging on the lake that day, and the steamer chosen for Her Majesty's passage was selected for its plush appointments rather than its seaworthiness—it was a very small and unsafe-looking vessel, and really some considerable danger was presented by the trip.

The Queen's ladies advised her to wait till the storm had subsided, but she herself did not wish to, being then as ever quite fearless. She turned to me and asked me if I also was afraid. “No, indeed!” I answered. “I will accompany you of course!” The Queen turned to the captain of the vessel, who himself was very averse to putting out in such dangerous weather, for Maggiore can be most treacherous at times. “*Semper avanti, Savoya!*” she exclaimed proudly, using as her command the undaunted motto of her House. And the ship faced out into the rearing waves.

We reached our destination safely, and formed a very pleasant little party. The young Duchess Isabella of Genoa was there, whom I had known so intimately years before when she was just plain daughter of Prince Adalbert of Bavaria. She, as well as the old Duchess and Queen Margherita, were passionately fond of music, and we had a very delightful musical evening. It is a notable fact that all the ladies of the Savoyard House love music, while the men are utterly void of all understanding of the art. The present King, for instance, is always annoyed when etiquette demands that he shall subject himself to a musical entertainment, and freely states that he considers it a waste of time and a nuisance to the hearing. He would give no more than an impatient nod to Orpheus himself!

CHAPTER XXXIII

1900-2

King Humbert murdered. Death of Queen Victoria. Prince Louis Napoleon paints Lodi red. Drinking the New Year in. A New Year ball. Discovery of St. Peter's pulpit. A midnight incident.

On a glorious evening of that July came to us the shocking news of the assassination of King Humbert the Good at Monza, by an anarchist whom all Italy, from the children in the streets to the oldest men, hated and hate to this day. King Humbert's life had been one of glorious bravery on the field of battle where he fought shoulder to shoulder with his men amid the Austrian sabres, and of no less splendid courage at home. He had personally rescued earthquake victims buried under menacing ruins after all efforts had been abandoned by the salvage officers ; he used to give over £100,000 per annum to charities from his private income ; he went personally among sufferers in cholera-ravaged towns, recklessly exposing himself to infection ; he had defeated a previous assassination attempt by drawing his own sabre and chasing his assailant—and then Italy was robbed of his wonderful guidance just when she needed it most, by the hand of a drink-sodden Bolshevik.

The first we knew of the tragedy was the receipt of a horrified telegram from my dear friend, Queen Margherita, addressed from Monza, and entreating me to speed to her side and comfort her in her terrible loss. She had always known that her Consort would end in that way ; years earlier, when a previous attempt was made, she had been dangerously ill for months as a result, and thereafter she had ever with her a dark premonition of her coming bereavement.

At a moment's notice, I had to leave my guests to shift for themselves and hurry away as fast as special train would carry me. I found Her Majesty dazed and terrified at her loneliness, lying in a darkened room. But Queens are not even permitted time for grief. She left almost at once for Rome, and thither I went with her, comforting her with what womanly tenderness I could—though what comfort could I offer to console her for that which she had lost?—and staying always at her side during those sombre, sorrowful days. At last, when the first acuteness of her hurt had changed to dull woe, and she was settled as comfortably as might be in the faithful and loving care of her own ladies, headed by her beloved Marchesa de Villamarina, I went back to the Lake again.

All Italy was in mourning for months afterwards; the people loved their King, and not one among them but could quote stories of his courage, his pity for the oppressed and his carelessness of his comfort and safety in their cause. I have never seen a nation so horror-stricken.

We returned to Rome in November for the celebration of the present King's birthday on St. Martin's Day. There was the usual great military review, but the martial spirit was absent, all the officers wore mourning bands round the arm, and the men—you could see it in their stern faces—were thinking of the good comrade who had gone, the man who had slept with them round the bivouac fire, selected for his own the square round which the pick of all Austria's cavalry raged with most deadly effect, taken his place in the last squads of the rearguard when his beloved Army was in forced retreat before an overwhelming foe, and tramped on foot for days through the bitter mountain passes, giving up his own horse to a footsore private. Only the thought that he would have had it so kept their iron lines unwavering and their rifles at the old perfect angle.

That was a very quiet winter for us; no entertaining save of a personal and subdued nature took place in all Italy, and there was no dancing. A further deep sorrow was added to our already overflowing cup—Queen Victoria, the greatest woman who has ever guided the destinies of a nation and an

empire, passed away on January 22nd, 1901, after a tragically brief illness.

The news was another great shock to me, bringing vividly back as it did all the sorrow and unhappiness which, so it had once seemed, her political views and her untactful way of expressing them had brought to me and my dear friend, her grandson, the Duke of Clarence. Had she only been possessed of the understanding sympathy of my darling Queen Alexandra, how much heartbreak might have been avoided ; for much that happened was merely caused by the clash of two wills of which that of the young Prince was not the least imperious.

I recalled in every poignant detail at that time the last private audience I had had with the old Queen-Empress. It was perhaps the only time when I saw the real woman who was so often hidden beneath the necessary pride and ceremony of the Sovereign. At other times, even when she was at ease among her ladies or walking or driving in the peaceful grounds of Osborne House, she never wholly lost the look of one whose inner mind was busy with national cares and world-important concerns. She would smile or talk to you, but her brain was still subconsciously busy with her commands for Mr. Gladstone or her plans for the development of the Suez. Her people and their needs came ever first.

But on this visit, for once, she laid aside the other cares and became for a short time just a wise, kindly old lady, as Grandmother had been. She talked to me with grave friendliness about my action in leaving England in order to dispel the indiscreet and disloyal canards published in the newspapers to the effect that the Duke of Clarence, her future successor to the English throne, was in opposition to her own political views concerning his future.

“Think of what your grandmother would have decided, and be a brave girl, putting the good of my nation before any feeling of anger at these ill-bred newspaper rumours and before even your own pleasure in spending a holiday with a dear friend,” she said ; and suddenly coming to my side, she put her arms about my shoulders and kissed me. It was



The Author in 1896, with two pet dogs descended from Queen Alexandra's favourite "Togo."

our last good-bye. Often, in those dark days after the news of her death came to us, I used to recall my last meeting with the old Queen, and her kindly words, her deep, grave eyes and her motherly kiss as she dismissed me for the last time from her Royal presence.

After a long period of gloom the sunny Italian nature reasserted itself, and the young officers of my husband's regiment came to me, begging me to organise such a round of gaieties as would dispel all our sad memories. Some of our neighbours in the surrounding villas added their pleas to the same effect ; though it is a peculiarity of Italian society that they are willing enough to accept hospitality but often very tardy to return it. During the nine years we stayed at Lodi, we were only invited out for dinner three times, while we held two or three bigger or smaller dinner parties each week, as well as frequent evening receptions and dances.

Prince Louis Napoleon had come back, just as charming and thoughtless and easy-going as ever, saying that he could not exist away from us. He was extremely fond of my husband, who with Prince Guelph Arese had been always his boon companion before my marriage. I remember Prince Louis telling me one afternoon that he and Prince Guelph were going to “ paint the town red ” as a sign that they had returned ; and certainly they got into enough scrapes and did enough hair-raising things during the next few weeks to prove their words—they were like a couple of delightful, irresponsible schoolboys.

The following Christmas was marked by a great dinner which we gave to all the young officers in the locality who were not spending the festival at their own homes. All their orderlies were entertained by our servants in the great servants' hall, and the guests below stairs were as numerous as those in our own vast banqueting hall above. We greeted the New Year in the same way. At midnight, a punch-bowl as big as a bath-tub was solemnly ushered in to us, the windows were flung wide, and as the bells of the city sent their joyous peals across to us, the punch-bowl was lighted, toast after toast enthusiastically drunk, and the

echoes of revelry arose gaily from the soldiers and servants feasting below. While the punch was still going round, a deputation from thence came to us, headed by our old Italian major-domo, and solemnly thanked us for the wine and wassail, largesse and good cheer we had provided ; it might have been a scene from the pages of a medieval romanticist.

The carnival was more than usually brilliant that year, and a great programme was prepared for the last two Mondays of the festival. The Opera House was converted into a dancing *salon* ; the officers took a whole row of boxes next to ours and removed their partitions, thus providing a sort of private ballroom where we could dance to the public music. We had historic processions in costume, and in one of these which represented Barbarossa's entrance to Lodi, Louis Napoleon took the part of the Emperor, clad in a perfect copy of the period armour, Prince Guelph looked magnificent in the costume of the wicked Duke Sforza of Milan, and the dresses of their following were so perfect that the cavalcade might well have been a procession of materialised ghosts.

The Prefect's lady found in this carnival an opportunity to display her imaginary superiority, and to strengthen her claims to notice she imported a couple of ancient ladies, widows of former Army generals, for the occasion. These black-clad dames happened both to be uncommonly voluminous, and when they appeared in the carnival attended by the Prefectess and her daughters, all of whom were somewhat more than slender, I regret to say that Prince Louis whispered in my ear—“ They have come to represent Pharaoh's fat and lean kine—we must see that a prize is awarded for so perfect a representation, even without the spurious aid of fancy dress ! ”—and he hurried off to make the suggestion to the judges. His outrageous inspiration was actually going to be put into effect, when the Prefecture party left abruptly—just in time ! The rest of us danced till five o'clock in the morning, and my husband said that some of the boys went back again to continue dancing after they had escorted us home.

Prince Louis had some magnificent horses, and between

these and our own stud and some of the regimental chargers we often enjoyed most exciting friendly races, under all proper rules, though I am bound to say that we did not very often provide the winners !

Cardinal Vaughan came to visit us at this time, just after the Lent season, and was greatly interested in our ancient town, which he had not previously seen. We showed him many attractive sights in the neighbourhood, and one of them was of peculiar interest to the famous churchman. I took him to Lodi Verchii, and in the ancient cathedral there, I was able to point out to him the identical scarred wooden pulpit in which, as I had discovered from my researches into tradition and legend, St. Peter himself had preached. That rough pulpit, held together by iron plates, is still to be seen on request to the Bishop of Lodi ; it was I who found it in the first place and had it brought to a position of honour, where it has remained, jealously guarded and venerated, ever since. Cardinal Vaughan, at this time, was just returning from a visit to Rome, where he had been elected to sit in St. Peter's Chair, which supreme honour, however, he had most decidedly refused. He was a magnificent figure in his Cardinal's robes ; I would much have liked to see him in full Papal splendour.

At this time, I met the Catholic Bishop of Chichester, now Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster. He was staying incognito at the house of our parish priest, seeking quiet in which to study. I called on him, and he later lunched with us at Isola Bella, where he went to see the ancient residence of St. Carlo and the celebrated collection at the Palace there.

During that summer, I went to stay for a time with Queen Margherita, who was living in strict retirement. The Duchess Isabella of Genoa was with her, and the Princess Schwartzburg Rudolphstadt with her two daughters ; we made a quiet and happy party. We made excursions into the mountains, for Queen Margherita was still at that time most active and courageous ; at other times, we sat sewing and talking, always avoiding any reference to the still recent tragedy.

When I returned to the villa, my old friend the Princess of Leringen was due there, and she proved as gay and fashionable as ever, and successfully dispelled my rather melancholy thoughts. I remember an amusing incident of that summer. I suffered a good deal from sleeplessness, as the weather was exceptionally hot, and one night, after I had lain awake for a long time, I heard steps moving about in the room above, which was occupied by the Princess. I called softly to her and asked her to come down and join me, which she did. She descended in her nightdress, a most beautiful and diaphanous creation of pale blue with a shoulder bouquet of tiny rosebuds, which she had just obtained from the most fashionable shop in Paris. Her wonderful long hair was tied in two gleaming plaits with blue ribbon, and a real rosebud was coquettishly set behind the ear. I was wearing a blush-rose nightdress, delicately trimmed with point lace, and after we had compared fashions for a minute or two, I proposed a pick-me-up, and rang the bell for my maid.

In the dim light of the reading-lamp, I mistook the ropes and pulled one that communicated with the room of the groom of the chambers. In a moment or two, the puzzled lad appeared, in a hasty and disordered costume and rubbing his eyes, for he had been wakened suddenly and was still half-asleep. He rubbed his eyes harder when he saw us, as if he were still dreaming, and said in an absent voice : “ Shall I order the carriage, Excellency ? ” He apparently thought that we were dressed for some entertainment or costume ball !

I told him that there was nothing wrong, and asked him to bring us half a bottle of champagne from the sideboard in the dining-room, which he did, and then gladly escaped. We could not help laughing at his astonished face.

Queen Alexandra wrote me begging me to come to her Coronation, but I was quite unwell at the time, my sleeplessness having developed seriously, and I was unable to leave the villa, despite my wish to go to England. I had a long letter from her immediately afterwards, saying how disappointed she had been at my absence.

The new Italian Royal couple had at this time been visiting the Court of St. James's, the Tsarina Maria Feodorowna having warmly recommended Queen Helen of Italy to the Queen of England, for Queen Helen had spent a good deal of time at the Russian Court. Queen Alexandra received her warmly, but the then unsophisticated daughter of the Prince of Montenegro was still somewhat unfamiliar with the etiquette of a great Court, so Her Gracious Majesty of England was even more than usually thoughtful and kind in coming frequently to her assistance at difficult moments, and in making what might otherwise have been embarrassing little incidents pass unnoticed when the young Queen Helen was uncertain of the regular procedure.

I retired at this time from any direct connection with the new Italian Court, and as it was customary that at least one member from each ancient family should attend, my husband's cousin, Princess Giovanelli, was made First Lady of the Palace there. She was considered a famous beauty, and her husband Prince Giovanelli was then possessed of over forty million lire as well as of half a dozen great estates. Queen Helen herself went to confer the Royal diamond monogram on her new Lady, instead of commanding the Princess to the Palace to receive it, though whether the millions had anything to do with this singular honour, who can say. Perhaps they did not, for the Princess was directly descended from Dante and the Scala Dukes of Verona. In any case, most of the millions are gone now, and her husband has even been reduced to selling the gems of his private picture gallery, once the most famous in that part of Italy. The world of society is full of such ups and downs.

CHAPTER XXXIV

1902-3

Miss Bowes-Lyon joins my suite. A Duse entertainment. An unhappy love affair. A Communist occasion.

DURING that winter, my *salons* were even more than usually frequented, and two distant cousins of mine, the Princess de Vere d'Aragon and the Countess Toschi-Marazan, came to stay with me. The latter lady claimed relationship through her Scottish Douglas descent, her family having fled to Italy after the 1745 rising, in the train of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and marrying into a noble Italian family, though still retaining with paramount pride the exact records of the Northern ancestry. The advent of two more Princesses gave the *coup de grâce* to the ambitions of the Prefectess—she retired without the laurels, and lived in comparative seclusion.

My entourage at this time consisted of two ladies who were wonderful natural contrasts to each other in appearance, and consequently, as often happens in such cases, the closest of friends. The Nobile Donna Lisa Volpi was a magnificent dark Roman type, with a splendid soprano voice, while Irene Bowes-Lyon typified all the charm and daintiness of a quiet little Northern maid, and her fair head was constantly bent over her embroidery. She had accepted a situation as reader and musician to me in order to help her widowed mother and assist in keeping a younger brother at college. How little we dreamed in those days that her niece would later become world-famous as the smiling Duchess of York, a Royal Highness, and the mother of—perhaps—a future Queen of England. It is the unexpected that always happens !

One morning as I sat peacefully in my boudoir taking tea with these two ladies, the groom of the chambers came in to tell me that Lieutenant Duse asked to be admitted to my presence. He was my husband's A.D.C., and a cousin of Eleanora Duse, who herself often said that her tragedy was no more skilful than his comedy : he was a godsend to us, always taking charge of entertainments and pageants, and managing them with truly wonderful ability.

When he was admitted, the young man explained that he had been deputed by a gathering of officers from surrounding districts to pay me their compliments and beg that they might be permitted to wait on me themselves at my afternoon reception and then attend my usual evening dance. I asked how many there would be, and was told about a dozen or more. I said that they might come to the dance, but that it would be too fatiguing to have to receive so many strangers first, and Lieutenant Duse, with his incomparable smile and bow, took his leave. I had hardly reached my dressing-room to be clad for a morning ride in the brougham when the groom reappeared, saying that the Lieutenant sought another interview. I returned to the boudoir where the girls were still seated, and the boy re-entered with one of his most comic beggar faces screwed up specially for the occasion and said that another contingent of young officers had just come post-haste to beg to be included in the invitation ! I asked him how many there were this time, and reminded him that we were prepared for only about twenty-five couples at the most. He told me there were about twenty more, and while I was considering the matter the Princess Leringen, accompanied by my Douglas cousin, who had been taking chocolate in their own rooms, suddenly rushed in and added their most earnest entreaties that I would let all the would-be guests attend. Their arrival was so opportune that I looked hard at Lieutenant Duse, but his gravity was portentous.

Explanations that we could hardly provide for so large a party in so short a time were swept aside ; the girls and Lieutenant Duse offered to take all the arrangements under

their control, the Lieutenant hinted that the regimental orderlies would welcome nothing so delightedly as a commission to ravage the shops of all nearby pastry-cooks and flower-sellers, servants were hurried into the cellars to fetch bottles, glasses, cups, saucers, plates and silver, sandwiches were cut—the villa swarmed like a beehive. Arrangements did not actually commence till after twelve o'clock luncheon had been cleared ; I received a number of local acquaintances in my boudoir during the afternoon and impressed on them that they must raise the whole female contingent of the country-side. After a brief dinner, I was dressed in a toilet of dawn-pink silk and rose brocade, relieved with Alençon lace—my wardrobe mistress was almost the most excited person in the household—and I descended to find the *salons* one continuous flower-garden. I was in what we called diplomatic time—diplomats and kings never keep people waiting—and by nine o'clock that evening gaiety held undisputed sway.

My ladies were in white and pink and white and silver ; I sat on a sofa in the first *salon* while the pick of the young officers of the Italian Army passed before me, introduced by my husband, their names being written on a list which I held hidden in my fan ; after the hand-kiss they passed into an inner *salon* where the Lieutenant introduced them to the ladies. No one who has not gone through such a ceremony can understand the fatigue of receiving dozens of strangers, talking to each for a moment, and making each one feel comfortable and at home.

Afterwards, I danced the opening *quadrille d'honneur* with the Prince d'Arese, and proceedings really began. My young ladies had translated the spirit as well as the letter of hospitality—it was like the realisation of a fairy tale of Hans Andersen...about a Princess' Palace in elf-land. There were about eighty couples dancing, the band, deep-hidden in the flower-arbour in the midst, played those exquisite waltzes and gavottes which the modern world worships, but dances to no more, the place was instinct with the murmur of silks, the sweep of splendid uniforms, the whisper of those who sat out in discreet arbours and the

enchanted rhythm of time-sure feet on the polished floors. Life was wonderful !

Towards the end of this season, a young cousin of my husband came to Lodi to study agriculture. He was the only son and heir of the feudal Count of Montanari, owner of some of the most ancient estates in the Veneto provinces, and a multi-millionaire. It had been understood from his childhood that he was to marry the only daughter of another great landed proprietor of noble Lombard family, but when the boy came to Lodi, Fate conspired against this arrangement. He was introduced to my beautiful young cousin, Ella Porter, who was staying with me at the time, and all visions of lands and money-bags faded before her lovely, laughing eyes. The young man's family ranked themselves powerfully against the wishes of the romantic boy and girl, and expressed themselves in a manner which caused great offence not only to the principals but to me also. I was forced to signify to the young man that under the circumstances he could not call at my *salons*, though I was very sorry for him personally. He returned to his family, violent scenes took place, and the family were forced to capitulate—but it was then too late. Miss Porter's family, though untitled, were as proud as any Prince in Italy, and they ordered their daughter to return home.

The lad never got over his disappointment. He became fast, squandered most of the family riches, ruined his health entirely, and died only a year or two later. By special Royal permission, the title went to wealthy distant cousins, who paid a very considerable amount to the Government for the privilege, and the original feudal family died out altogether. It is an object lesson to unduly repressive parents that they cannot always force their own views on their children.

During the autumn, when we were sitting one day at the luncheon table, I saw three gentlemen pass the open door and go to the entrance. When their cards were presented I did not recognise their names, but as one was the Mayor of a neighbouring big town, I had them told that I would receive them. When I entered with my ladies, the Mayor

explained that his mission was to invite me to act as godmother to the flag which had been presented by the ladies of the Province for the famous Avanti sports club, and to beg me to award the prizes for a grand bicycle race which had been arranged between all the cycling clubs of that part of Italy. Also, said the Mayor, as I had influence with the Royal House, would I intercede with His Majesty for a sign that he took an interest in the undertaking.

I should explain that at this time the Communist and anarchist movement in Italy, which came to such a head a few years ago that it seemed for a time that the reigning house would be exterminated and the country given over to chaos and murder, was just then seriously getting a hold of the popular imagination, and nowhere more so than in the sports clubs of the young men. It is always the young who are the anarchists ; and I foresaw quite well that my reception, and the things I should feel it my duty to say on the subject of loyalty and honour, might be most unpalatable to the young hotheads of the club.

“I approve of your appellation—Avanti—and I will accept for that reason,” I said to the Mayor. “It is the motto of our glorious reigning house,” and I lifted my voice to pronounce that fearless claim, “Semper avanti, Savoya !”

I wrote at once a personal letter to the King, and immediately received a wire from his first A.D.C. saying that the Gold Medal of Merit of the Savoya House had been at once dispatched to my address. A little later I received a personal reply from His Majesty, graciously thanking me for my loyal sentiments and readiness to act on them in this case.

It was necessary to prepare an address for the baptism of the standard, to which I had myself, of course, liberally contributed, but when I raised my voice to declaim passages from the address, people used to stop outside the garden wall and listen in surprise, so I was obliged to row out on to the lake with my entourage, where we enjoyed many a good laugh about our various difficulties.

On the appointed day twelve splendidly built young men

on racing cycles presented themselves at the great gate of the villa as my guard of honour, surrounded my carriage, and escorted it to the town, where about two hundred other mounted young men met us, dividing into two ranks as the carriage passed and then falling in in military style behind and following in regular squadrons, perfectly marshalled. At the same time the church bells all around burst into a joyful peal, borrowed artillery thundered out a Royal salute, and both sounds were drowned by the cheering of a thousand throats. At the foot of the specially erected grand stand, I was received by the Mayor and dignitaries of the town, and with my ladies conducted up the steps to the dais.

The standard was there, held by the godfather ; I lifted my right hand and pronounced the baptismal blessing, “ In the name of His Majesty, King Victor Emanuel of Italy ! ” and once more the cheering broke out, though this time the powerful anarchist element present began to murmur and move restlessly. When the cheering stopped there was a moment of tense and pregnant silence. The Communist leaven gathered strength, the atmosphere became menacing, the Mayor moved uneasily and looked towards the weak contingent of police who were present.

I began to speak. I told them of the great traditions of Italy, from the days when Rome ruled the world ; and I exhorted them to think of their country first, and of themselves and the foreign-paid agitators last. I spoke of their beloved dead King Humbert, and of his fearless son, Victor Emanuel, under whose rule Italy might become a great power once more. My concluding words then in 1905 were those very prophetic words since adopted by Italy's greatest Prime Minister, the Redeemer of the nation from anarchist horrors and disgrace, Signor Mussolini. I said : “ The greatest and final glory of our beloved Italy we may not see. But those who come after us shall see it ; they shall greet an Italy which is the Motherland of a new Roman Empire, and only our sacrifices, our courage and our loyalty can make that possible. Do we love Italy enough to live for such an end ? ”

Between four and five thousand Socialists were present, and we learned afterwards that most of them had come deliberately to show their disapproval of any mention of the Royal House. Instead, as my words died away, there arose such a thunderstorm of “ *Vivas* ” as I have never heard elsewhere. The whole vast assembly before me seemed to go mad ; I saw a forest of waving arms and caps ; the cheering deafened me ; someone had got to the guns, but their crashing volley was hardly individually audible ; piercing the wild din was a thin tinkle—all that could be heard of madly-swinging church bells ; I thought the noise would never cease.

It did at last. I was escorted by cheering masses to the banquet, flattered by eloquent discourses by the authorities, tried to find words in which to thank them all for the honor done me, professed myself, as indeed I was, overwhelmed by the reception of my speech, and returned at last in my carriage, in which I could scarce find room for the flowers that had been packed there, borne along by a seething throng which still cheered intermittently.

That was my last great public appearance. My husband, who had arrived at the villa before I returned, changed into mufti (uniforms were not permitted at the gathering) and rode out to meet me. I was still flushed with the entirely unexpected reception which my exhortations to loyalty had won from so unlikely a source, but his loving greeting was more to me than all their cheers. After all, I was a woman, not a politician.





The Author and her husband a year after marriage.

CHAPTER XXXV

1903-4

Charity tours in *The Lady of the Lake*. A Tail-Wagger incident.
A military tournament. A farewell ball.

OUR circle was at this time augmented by a most agreeable contingent in the form of the brothers Solaro del Borgo, of a very famous old Piedmontese family which had several times played a great part in Italian history. Count Alberto Solaro del Borgo, who is now Grand Master of Horse to the King of Italy, was a particularly engaging young man, and became a daily visitor to us. He was a welcome addition to our Christmas and New Year parties, and afterwards to our little private dances and receptions.

At one of these latter I received a curious reminder of the doings of the earlier summer. A young Neapolitan officer one day asked permission to present to me a young Irish Oxford student of the name of Herbert Cosgrave. When, in due course, this young man appeared before me, he said : "So at last I have obtained an introduction to you, Princess ! " and laughed. I asked him to explain.

The previous summer, we had all been very busy making collections for the unhappy victims of the terrible Calabrian earthquake, and one evening after dinner, when we had been enjoying the lovely voices of my two ladies, Miss Bowes-Lyon and Donna Volpi, I was suddenly struck by an idea. "We will go across the lake," I exclaimed, "and put on lace carnival masks, sing at the big hotels there and collect 'pro Calabria.' I will order the boat at once."

Five minutes later we were sitting in the *Lady of the Lake*, and my two stout rowers were taking us swiftly across the

moonlit water. First we went to the Hotel Regina at Stresa We stepped on to the lawn outside, and Donna Lisa lifted up her wonderful rich soprano, accompanying herself with a guitar. After the first verse the proprietor of the hotel himself came out and asked us to come inside, as the patrons were in evening dress and were afraid of the dews on the lawn, though they much desired to be nearer. We went in, accompanied by my two rowing boys, clad in white and blue ; a big arm-chair was brought for me, the rowers stood behind it, and the girls beside me, ready to sing. Irene sang “ Home, Sweet Home ” in English, and then one of Moore's Irish melodies, and then Lisa boldly rendered “ Tutte le feste al tempio,” receiving tremendous applause. I took the cap of one of the rowers, and in it collected a most generous harvest of gold and silver.

As we went away we were followed by several of the younger men. We were still wearing our masks, of course, and one of these followers came up to me and said, with a blarneying Irish brogue : “ Do take off your mask now, and let us see your face ; it's cruel to show us such eyes only ! ” My lovely young Roman stepped between us in an instant —she was always very quick at repartee—and said : “ If you wish to contribute, here is the cap ; if you want to be presented to my lady, you must have recourse to your Ambassador or to the Royal Court.” She gave him a deep, mocking curtsey and we all hurried into our boat again.

We had not, however, shaken off our pursuers. They clambered into a motley collection of boats that lay at the lake-side, and pulled after us. My brave lads bent to their oars, and after an exciting chase over the silvery rippling waves, we gradually outdistanced them all. As we disappeared from their sight at last, I called back to them Cinderella's farewell words as she left the Royal ball : “ Dark ahead, light behind, nobody shall know my course ! ”

But in the end, as you see, someone did discover it. This young man who was now presented to me was none other than the reveller who had besought me to remove my mask on that summer night. He was a delightful person, and so

we asked him to the reception that evening ; he afterwards became a great friend.

That was our last winter with the Regiment. My husband was due for promotion, which would have meant that we should have to go to Rome and take our part in society life there with the new Court, which we did not wish to do. It was decided, therefore, that my husband should leave the Army in the following spring, so that we might have a chance to live our own life apart from the exigencies of military service.

My cousin, the Duchess d'Aragon, held a great farewell ball in our honour, to which the Regiment and all the local aristocracy were invited. My wardrobe-mistress and maids prepared for me a most elaborate toilet, old Francesca herself having worked for eleven years at the Maison Felix and two at the Palais des Modes in Paris and being a past-mistress of the art of costume. It consisted of a pale heliotrope three-quarter train with a skirt of white *crepe de Chine*, with Mechlin lace medallions ; the bodice was of heliotrope velvet *crepe de Chine* and Mechlin lace, with an enormous white ostrich feather fastened on the shoulder by a diamond clasp. This wonder was placed amid the soft cooing of old Francesca on the low dressing-table in my boudoir, as the dressing-room itself was already overflowing with under-wear, train, shoes, gloves and sundries, and I went down to dinner. When I went up again afterwards, and rang the bell for my maids to come and dress me, imagine my horror when I found my darling little Yorkshire terrier “ Togo,” a descendant of Queen Alexandra’s favourite “ Togo,” placidly asleep in the centre of my poor dress ! She had scratched and fashioned it into a perfect little nest, and at my exclamation she looked up at me sweetly and calmly, as if to invite my admiration for her skill in selection and execution !

Francesca sobbed as if her old heart would break, my maids looked on round-eyed and frightened, only the little dog was placidly contented. I had to have another toilet hurriedly fetched from the wardrobe for the occasion, while my bad little comrade was left in undisputed possession.

The first person I met downstairs was the dear, homelike wife of the General in command of the district. She seldom went into society, but had attended our farewell ball as a signal mark of honour. She was a firm believer in crinolines, and though the fashions of the day forbade her actually wearing that mode, she had had her petticoat soundly starched, making her lovely taffeta dress stand out just as if a crinoline were beneath it. The dress was by no means over-long, but she insisted on lifting it carefully when she passed across the *salons*, though they were really quite well covered with carpets !

A last farewell entertainment was given us by the officers of the Regiment, in the form of a mounted tournament, at which I was to present a rose for a tilting joust. This amusement was to take place in accurate medieval style and costume, and great searches were made for the proper period armour. All the ladies of the regiments in the district command worked the leaves of a gigantic rose, embroidering the petals in fine stitches, and the rose was to be the principal prize at the tourney.

The day came, cloudless and blue, a rostrum was erected in the vast enclosure, and a great multitude of people gathered outside from town and country to witness the performance. Proceedings commenced with mounted dances, and it was a magnificent sight to watch the brilliant young officers in glittering uniforms, controlling their spirited horses, while the latter lifted dainty feet and tossed noble heads perfectly to the time of the bands' music, performing quadrilles, cotillions and gavottes as neatly as in the ball-room.

Then followed the grand event of the day—the tourney for the rose. First of all, four cavaliers in full armour fought for the honour of presenting the rose to my hand. One by one, the young riders were unhorsed, and at last the victor rode up and offered me the jealously-sought prize. One furtive glance showed me that not all the ladies who had worked it had been taught embroidery by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart ! Some of the leaves were quite remarkable, especially those, as I afterwards discovered, which had been



Queen Alexandra with "Togo," from whom the Author's "Togo" (see Chapter XXXV) descended.

done for such ladies as did not trust themselves with the work, at a nearby convent under the patronage of my old friend the Prefectess. She had considered the finished work quite good enough to be torn to pieces by those wretched boys in their silly, childish pranks, but it showed rather startlingly against some of the beautiful work on others of the petals.

I leaned forward and tossed the huge rose well out into the throng of mounted and fully armed knights who rode below me—just for all the world like a packed lists in the distant days of chivalry. A bristle of lances stabbed suddenly up to meet it, one cavalier actually caught it on his lance-point, and next moment he was away at a thundering gallop down the lists with the other knights stretching out at full speed after him. What a sight of tossing manes and glittering armour, stabbing lances and waving plumes, knights unhorsed who went rolling under yet always miraculously missing the thudding feet of the wild chargers, and brown, tense faces as the rose went this way or that or was stabbed suddenly from one lance-head to another by some daring and deft cavalier !

After twenty-five minutes, according to previously agreed rules, heralds stepped into the lists, raised their long trumpets and blared forth the command to cease the joust. The cavalier who then had the rose on his lance was a brilliant young Piedmontese, Lieutenant Count Maximilian Cortheniglia, who from the commencement had worn my colours. He trotted his horse to the steps of the rostrum, dismounted, came up to me, dropped on one knee and laid the rose gracefully at my feet, while the bands struck up the fanfare of my husband's regiment, and a moment later the guns thundered out a salute.

After kissing my hand, he accompanied me to the front of the rostrum, I waved my handkerchief and dropped a deep curtsey, the guns re-echoed in a new volley and suddenly, spontaneously, every rider below me in the lists drew his sword, there was one great flash in the sun, and two hundred blades were raised in a glittering salute. It is one of my most precious memories.

We had one more delightful evening before we said good-bye for ever to all our young soldier friends. It was on the very last night of our stay, all the furniture was packed and even the dining-room was littered with packing-cases and portmanteaux, when suddenly the groom of the chambers came in and announced the Count Solaro, his two brothers (one of whom is now First Gentleman-in-Waiting to Queen Helen of Italy), and the Prince Arese. Chairs were found from somewhere for me and my ladies, the boys sat on the packing-cases, my husband ordered that one of the nearby cases of champagne should be opened, and we drank healths, chaffed and chattered in high glee at our novel surroundings. Next morning we left Lodi.

CHAPTER XXXVI

1906-7

A Danish Royal funeral. A mountain tragedy. The fulfilment of a vow. A Royal assassination. The man about the house. The ghostly friar. Carnival in Milan. A noble organ-grinder.

I WAS particularly invited to Denmark to attend the funeral of King Christian IX, whose connections with other reigning houses were so extensive that he was commonly known at the time as "the Father of Royal Europe." All the relations were assembled when I arrived. Queen Alexandra was very unhappy ; she was the old King's favourite daughter, and dearly loved that magnificent type of royalty which her father so splendidly portrayed.

The Kaiser was present also, repeating what he had so often previously asserted, that he counted himself a son of the Royal Danish house. On the strength of this claim, he attempted to offer his arm to Queen Alexandra at the procession when the King's coffin was moved in cortege, so that he might be counted among the chief mourners. The Queen, however, looked steadily at him, dropped a very deep curtsey, and instead took the arm of her brother, King George of Greece. "Forgive me," she said, "I am already engaged." The Kaiser's face hardened at the snub, but he said nothing.

It was a sad and solemn time, for everyone felt that with the passing of so great a man, monarchy had advanced into a new, less dignified, less patriarchal epoch ; one wondered if it could survive at all another such great collapse. I had a number of long and confidential talks with Queen Alexandra, and we spoke of our old friends and happy memories. I remember her looking up sadly at me then, as we sat

together one dreary afternoon, and saying with a pathos that was near to tears, “ I love to talk to those to whom I can say ‘ Do you remember ’—for only with such is one not really a stranger. Write to me often, Famy ; we have our memories. I am sad that the distance prevents us from meeting except so very seldom.” She made me promise that I would visit her in England as soon as it was at all possible for me to leave Italy, and tried to persuade me to return with her, but that was impossible, as my home had naturally first claim on me.

When I returned to Italy, we decided to make our summer residence in future at Maccagno, on the most beautiful part of Lake Maggiore, and when we adjourned there, we were given a delightful spontaneous reception by the inhabitants of the little town. All the church bells were pealing, the band met us at the beginning of the High Street and escorted us forward, and the town council, headed by the Mayor, officially welcomed us with a formal speech. The speech, however, broke down under the solemnity of the occasion, reminding me of an amusing similar occurrence which had happened to my grandfather in Scotland.

He had been specially asked to be present at a banquet given in a Highland town in honour of the retiring Mayor, at which the incoming Mayor was to present a great silver loving-cup to his predecessor as a mark of the town's esteem of his services. Lengthy and sounding speeches were prepared by both men, and at the banquet itself, their lips could be seen moving silently as they repeated feverishly the words they dreaded to forget. After a time, however, Grandfather noticed that the warming effect of the usquebach was making both of them more cheerful and less introspective, and when eventually the loving-cup was brought in on a tray in state by a manservant, the new Mayor rose reluctantly, stood wildly trying for a minute to recollect his beautiful speech of presentation, and finally stammered, “ Eh—eh—eh—yon's the joog, mon ! ” to which the recipient replied equally tersely, “ Ay, is she the joog ! ” whereat they both sat down again amid a thunderous clattering of tankards.

The speech of the Mayor of Maccagno got somewhat

farther than this, but then stuck hopelessly. The band, however, saved the situation by striking up a lilting march air, and as the speech was printed in full in all the local papers, this gem of eloquence was not forever lost, like its Highland relation.

We took the old Palace of Maccagno, a building founded in 900, when a rich noble in the suite of Otto the Great of Germany built it for himself, and King Otto held his Court there. Later, it became a monastery of Black Friars, but they in their turn left the ancient place, and we found it somewhat ruinous through having been long left empty. We planned to have a number of unsightly old houses nearby demolished and to make many costly alterations, but just in time we learned that the Government was already planning a road to Switzerland which would cut through the heart of our grounds, while the dwellings to be erected upon it would cut off our view of the Lake. Consequently we were obliged at last to warn the occupants of Grandfather's villa further down the Lake that they must quit the building within two years—they had still not paid a penny for it—while at leisure we sent some of the historic paintings and tapestries from the old Palace to what would in time be our new and we hoped permanent home. Alas for our hopes!

At this time, I commenced to turn my serious attention to the place where I am now writing this book, though I little dreamed then that I should ever be forced to retire to it myself. It was the ruin of that nunnery from which Napoleon had driven out the Sisters, and where in earlier days in A.D. 775 St. Dunstan of England met King Eric Ejegod, at the latter's first resting-place on Italian soil. As the fulfilment of my vow made with the Duke of Clarence so many years earlier, I proposed to restore the historic building; and it seemed to me fitting that the monument of the Pilgrim King should take the form of a hostelry at which other wayfarers and pilgrims to the Holy City might rest.

The task of restoration was by no means an easy one. I had to purchase the surrounding land little by little, as it now belonged to a number of small owners who were

not all of them anxious to leave their holdings. Then the place itself was no more than a weather-beaten shell, and it was not easy to obtain plans and materials which would restore it in an appropriate and artistic fashion. I had decided that a chapel should be erected on the site of the Nunnery chapel, where the pious Sisters of old had prayed so often that by now the very ground must be sanctified, and I spent a good deal of time considering various details in connection with the work.

My decision to make the monument take the form of a resting-place for wayfarers was strengthened by a happening which had just at that time shocked all that part of Italy. Workmen blasting rocks in the mountains nearby in preparation for the new road came upon a cave, from which they had blown a huge mass of fallen rock, and found inside it the skeleton of a man and a dog. A rusted and ruined watch-case found near the bones showed that the victim was a young Dutch artist, and the circumstances of his death came home with awful suddenness to the memories of a number of the older inhabitants of Maccagno. About thirty years previously, on a dark, stormy night, a young artist accompanied by a big dog had sought food and shelter on the outskirts of Maccagno, saying he had lost his road. But the people of those days were suspicious, as a good many robberies with violence had been carried out locally, and the doors were slammed in the wayfarer's face. At the last house at which he was refused, the young man shouted that he would tramp on over the border into Switzerland where perhaps the people would possess better manners.

Later that night and during the next day, people in houses nearer the border had heard the muffled howling and barking of a dog without being able to locate the sound, and a week or two afterwards, the Dutch Consul at Milan had made enquiries in Maccagno for a young Dutchman who had been traced so far and had then disappeared from human ken. The young man must have sheltered from the weather in the cave and been imprisoned there by a fall of rock caused by the gale.

I was terribly impressed at the finding of the skeletons,

and at the thought of the awful final hours of those two companions in their living grave, and I gave orders to the police of all the neighbouring villages that all wayfarers seeking shelter should be sent to me at my expense. Temporarily, I arranged a few rooms in one of the cottages in our grounds, and often after that needy wanderers were sent me and made comfortable there.

That autumn, I went to Rome for a short stay with Queen Margherita, who had often lately begged me to come to her. King George of Greece was there at the time—he was, of course, a son of the Royal Danish house and a childhood friend of mine—and we had many long talks of Denmark and of our happy days there. He was, I remember, full of fresh plans for the welfare of his country, and ardently discussed them with me. When he came to the throne of Greece, chosen thereto by the vote of the Greek people and abandoning a happier career in his own country to meet their wishes, he had chosen as his motto, “My strength is the love of my people,” and in a reign of fifty years he amply proved his words. Some time after this meeting of mine with him, when, as was well known in Royal circles he was about to celebrate his Jubilee by abdicating in favour of his son, he was brutally shot down by an anarchist in Salonika.

When I returned to Maccagno, I engaged a lady secretary-companion of English parentage who was a most interesting character. On one occasion, a wounded quail was brought in by one of our dogs, and my companion, deeming it to be a male, made a great fuss of it, cured its wound, and kept it as a pet. One day, however, it disgraced itself by laying an egg, and it then immediately fell out of favour, and was banished to the servants’ quarters. Apparently the idea was to have a “man about the house”—nothing else would do!

This lady was psychic and clairvoyante, and as tradition gifted our old house with several ghosts, she had a most interesting time in communication with them. In particular, a ghostly black friar still watched over a great treasure which was rumoured to have been hidden centuries earlier

under our cellars ; he was, in fact, that same friar who had been walled up while yet alive because of his persistent refusal to tell where King Eric's crucifix was hidden, and now he came to its hiding-place, whose secret had died with him, to keep it clean and bright and see that no robber hand was laid upon the relic which he had given his life to guard.

A small door, connecting with the cellars, stood in one corner of our banqueting hall, and often while we sat at dinner my companion would see the ghostly figure glide past us through that door, and down the narrow winding stair which led, among other things, to our wine-cellars ! The rest of us could not see the spectral visitor, but we thought at times that we heard the clink and rattle of his chains ; a cock was put in a cage in the haunted cellar and screamed horribly at midnight ; a skein of wool was fastened across with certain mystic formulæ which made it impossible for a ghost to pass without breaking it, and it was broken surely enough ; and in the end I began to worry about him myself.

One evening I heard the chain rattling quite distinctly outside the door of my dressing-room, and in an attempt to pull back the heavy medieval bolt quickly in order to get a word with the elusive spectre before he passed, I sprained my arm and fainted—evidently he did not want to converse with me ! My husband had up to then been rather amused about our ghost, but at this juncture he felt that the friar had forgotten his manners, and arranged for my companion to take up another post with a Russian Princess at San Remo. She did not stay there very long either, but left shortly for the London West-End, where her name—Miss Robins—has, I believe, since become very famous as that of one of the greatest of living clairvoyantes.

Just after Miss Robins left us, we went to Milan for the Grand Carnival. We enjoyed theatres and balls and receptions, especially one held by the Duchess Melzi, where everything was most entertaining and attractive. The Melzi exchequer had been repaired a little while before by the marriage of Alfonso Melzi to “ the widow Branca,” many times millionairess as the result of the fortunate reception

of a famous Italian patent medicine. The lady declared that she was tired of having people be excessively polite before her face and whisper the name of the patent behind her back, and to avoid the annoyance she married the Duke di Melzi-Eril. She paid all his debts, which were legion, and fixed on him an income of a quarter of a million lire annually on condition that he stayed away from her and left her to live her own life, experience, as she said dryly, having shown her the wisest course to pursue.

She was staying with her mother-in-law, the old Duchess Melzi-Eril, when we were in Milan for the carnival, and a curious incident occurred when she was presented to me by a mutual distant relation as “our new cousin, the Duchess Melzi-Eril.” I had been dancing for a rather long evening, and was tired and a little confused, and without realising my terrible error, I said : “ New cousin ? Melzi-Eril ? Ah—*née* Fernet Branca ? ” which was the name of the patent from which the Branca millions had originated. The Duchess, who was a clever woman and always ready for a joke, laughed heartily at my discomfiture when I discovered what I had said, and we became very friendly.

At a ball during the carnival, the Count of Turin, the King's cousin and Commander of Military Forces in the province, was present. At that time I had not met him, nor had I cared to do so, as I understood from various sources that he was unable to forget his rank as Royal cousin and consequently treated his own young officers and also other people in a most offhand and discourteous manner. During the ball in question, his Adjutant came over to me and asked me if I desired to be presented to His Royal Highness. I replied instantly that if His Royal Highness desired to be presented to me, I should be sensible of the honour ; but that I had never been presented to any man save a reigning monarch. To prevent complications, I left the *salon* as soon afterwards as I could in politeness do so, so I never heard how the Duke received my message.

During that summer, I had a long visit from Sibyl, Countess of Cromarty, who was an old acquaintance, and who specially wished to see my stepbrother again. She had

known him during the time we were so frequently at Osborne House, when Sir Sidney Streatfield had first interested them both in Druidic remains, but at the time of her visit my stepbrother was living in a primitive hut in a village near Maccagno, studying Druidic traditions and legends. After a great deal of persuasion, he consented to come at midnight and return before dawn, saying that those who were reduced to the existence of ghosts could travel only at nights. He was most eloquent and learned, and greatly interested my guest, but he would talk of nothing but his own subject of the long-dead religion of the stone circles.

A young officer who became friendly with us at this time was the Count Paulet del Melle, whose name had become a household word in England some time before in connection with a lawsuit almost as famous as the later Tichborne case. An ancestor of this young man had gone to England, squandered all his riches there, and ended as an organ-grinder with a monkey seeking alms in the London squares. Before this reverse in fortunes, he had married into a noble English family, the elder branch of which became extinct while the Count was going round with his monkey and organ, and he then became the next in succession. His claim was opposed by more distant relatives of the family, but after a dramatic case, the law decided in the Italian's favour. All the English property was sold, the ex-organ-grinder returned to his own land, and in the course of time the remnants of the fortune descended to the young Count Paulet.

CHAPTER XXXVII

1907-9

No other tiger. . . . The beggar Princess. Death of Princess Marie of Denmark. With the Kaiser in Venice. Blessing the wine-harvest.

THE next winter season passed very quickly, and towards spring my little cousin, Ella Porter, wrote from India asking if she could visit me again. She and her mother had been staying with the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, and at a great tiger-hunt she had attended an animal had been shot which had three tiny cubs. One of these had been given to Ella, and she particularly asked me if I would mind her bringing her new pet, which she described as the sweetest little animal in the world, and which was sitting in her lap as she wrote.

To weaken any opposition on my part, she reminded me of a baby eagle which had been given me in Switzerland by some local mountaineers, and which had grown big and savage and was then amenable only to Ella and myself. We called it "Nibelung," and carried it on the wrist as ladies of old carried falcons ; it enjoyed perfect freedom but always stayed near us, though it attacked anyone else who approached. When we had to return to my husband's regiment, I had engraved on the bird's silver ring the words : "I belong to the Princess Famy. I am the eagle of liberty. Respect me." We then tried to persuade him to leave us, but for some days he stayed near at hand, coming in regularly to be fed, though we no longer took him in at nights. Finally, he swept away in magnificent curves towards the higher mountains and never returned.

Of course, I told Ella that she could bring her tiger-cub,

and that I would try to make so unusual a guest quite welcome. She travelled to us with the party of the Maharajah himself, who was paying a return visit to the Austrian Court, and he stayed a few days with us to break his journey there. He brought me some magnificent Indian embroideries, including the front of a Court dress worked by the same hand which worked the front of Queen Alexandra's coronation robe. It was worked in heavy gold and silver thread, with a multitude of the diamond splinters which fall when bigger stones are cut. I have worn this front only three times, as it is too magnificent for ordinary wear, and it has excited very great admiration and attention each time.

The tiger-cub proved to be as sweet and pretty as Ella had claimed, but it grew very quickly after reaching us, and Maccagno in general did not care for it. After a short stay, she decided to go to England to fulfil invitations there, taking her pet with her. On the train, however, a conductor, not noticing that the compartment taken by Ella was specially reserved for her party, put an old lady in it, and as the train was full, no objection was made. My cousin, forgetting that all her sex was not possessed of her strong nerves, opened her travelling basket when tea was served, and removed the cub to feed it. There was a single terrible scream, a flutter and whisk of skirts, and the old lady had escaped to the corridor, pulled the communication cord and collapsed fainting where she stood. The train stopped, guards and conductors came and argued and threatened, and finally the railway company sued Ella for carrying the tiger with her, but the case went against them on the ground that the compartment was reserved for her party, and the cub was undoubtedly a member of it.

Her troubles, however, had only commenced. Wherever she went, the now half-grown animal caused alarms and excursions. When she went to stop with her aunt, Lady Russell, the servants threatened to give notice in a body. She was advised to give the troublesome pet to the Zoo, but she could not bring herself to part with it, for it was most affectionate to her though it often looked quite hungrily at other people. Finally it got ill and had to be sent to a



King Eric Ejegod's Memorial Chapel erected by wish of the Author and the Duke of Clarence.

veterinary surgeon. His decision, possibly arrived at after advice from higher quarters, was that the animal was incurable and must be shot, and so Ella was left inconsolable, though Lady Russell no doubt felt quite relieved that Fate had been so kind to her.

One evening shortly after Ella had left for England, we were sitting in my boudoir talking for a little before we began some music when the groom of the chambers came up and explained extremely apologetically that he had been informed by the kitchen staff that a poor ragged woman had come to the servants' entrance and asked to see me. The groom had gone down to see her, meaning to send her away, but she had said the Princess would be very angry indeed if the message was not delivered.

“Is it a beggar?” I asked.

“She is dressed like one, Highness,” replied the man, “but she does not speak like any beggar I ever saw—more like a lady accustomed to be obeyed.”

“Let her come up to the library,” I told him.

I went down, and a moment or two afterwards the woman was shown in to me. She was tall, stooping, pale and worn, but her lined face—or as much of it as I could see under the broken brim of a terrible old hat—showed traces of what had once been great beauty. She came towards me with pitiful hesitation, still keeping her face in shadow. Suddenly she burst into a violent storm of sobbing, and cried out in awful, tragic tones: “Oh, Famy, don’t you know me!” It was my cousin, Princess Elvira de Bourbon, Don Carlos’s proud and beautiful daughter, once the intended future Queen of Italy!

She was dressed in dreadful beggar’s rags, her once lovely hair was fastened anyhow in an untidy knot, the white fingers which kings had been proud to kiss were stained and with ragged, blackened nails, the haughty eyes were furtive and wolfish now, and the Royal hand which had once carried with it a dowry of over a million now clutched a bit of cracked black oilcloth in which she carried all her poor worldly possessions.

With pitiful sobs she told me her story. Somehow she had

blindly made her way across the intervening leagues to the only friend in whom she still felt she could trust, and, as she said, if I turned her out to die, she had not even spirit enough left to blame me.

I was horrified and overwhelmed with pity and anger, but at least I could reassure her that now she was safe. I had her brought up at once to one of the great rooms nearest my own, and told my personal women to see to her comfort. Food and rest were her most vital needs ; she was unable to leave her bed for some days through exhaustion, but a few simple home remedies and a careful diet advised by my husband (who, like all higher Italian officers, knew enough of medicine to treat anything but serious illnesses in his regiment) soon brought back some of her strength again. My villa was a safe haven for the unhappy wanderer, but the look of terror never wholly died out of her eyes.

I got into touch with a number of her closest relatives, and between us we arranged for her to go to Switzerland, where we provided her with one of those tiny red cottages and a little income, so that she might live in quiet and comfort for a few years at least.

Only a few years ago she died of consumption in a charity hospital in Paris. Death exonerates all ; her poor wasted body was brought back to the Royal family vault near Viareggio to rest at last on the same day that the Queen of Italy, whose place she was formerly expected to occupy, was the centre of homage at her son's wedding at the palace in Rome, and wore a dress so heavy with gold, silver and historic jewels that after the ceremony she almost fainted from exhaustion.

In the following December came the sad news of the death of my dearly beloved Princess Marie of Denmark-Orleans-Chartres. I was overwhelmed by the news, which was utterly unexpected ; only a fortnight before I had had a letter from her arranging for me to go for a long visit to her in the following spring. I received many letters from mutual friends expressing their sorrow at my especial loss, for Marie had always been my dearest friend. One of the letters was from Queen Alexandra, who after sympathising with me in

her own understanding way, pressed me to come a little later and stay with her at Sandringham and Buckingham Palace for the farewell balls before the Queen left for a long cruise in the Mediterranean, which I promised to do.

In the early spring, I was invited to Venice to stay with my husband's cousin, Anna Morosina. The Kaiser, on his way to Trondhjem, had anchored the *Hohenzollern* at Venice, and was a daily guest. A great dinner was given at the house to all the descendants of the Doges and the distinguished visitors to the city; the palace was transformed into an unending maze of flowers and perfumes in a manner never seen save at Venice, where the impression is not of the present but of some historic banquet of the Doges in the time when the Morosinas sat on the Royal throne. The Kaiser was charmed with the beauty of the ball, and sought me out as soon as he had paid his compliments to our hostess. That was the first occasion on which he had had the opportunity of speaking to me alone, and his first words were: “I am sorry, too, Princess—so sorry! We have both of us lost a very dear friend and I have lost a guiding star. I shall never find her like again in the stormy sea of politics.” He spoke of Princess Marie of Denmark, and his expressive eyes showed such deep feeling that I thought he was almost near to tears. It was well known in Royal circles at the time that my darling friend had a very great influence both on the Tsar and the Kaiser, and that it was largely owing to her tact and diplomacy that any sort of friendly relations were maintained between Denmark and Germany at that trying time. I could hardly control my tears at his vibrant voice, and he said again, “I feel our loss, too!”

We talked for some time about his forthcoming visit to Norway, where he said he was much looking forward to another meeting with Queen Alexandra, whom he always greatly admired. He had just returned from a State visit to London, and was full of interest and appreciation for the “City of the World.” “I would rather be an Englishman than belong to any other nation, if I could not be a German,” he said; and for a long while he discussed animatedly the future of the world if only Germany and England could

combine to rule it in what he claimed would be an undisputed sway of peace and justice and happiness.

After this visit, I went with my husband to his old family home on Lake Garda, where he went to stay with his family to celebrate the local wine harvest. The Marchesa Carlotta Rudini, a daughter of the Royal Italian house, called often, and took us for long drives in her wonderful carriages, which were then famous throughout the country. Each was big enough to accommodate a whole party, and they were pulled by a team of eight thoroughbred perfectly-matched horses driven with wonderful skill and verve by the Princess herself, for she was a matchless horsewoman in every sense of the word. I found her most interesting and charming company, though there were many who did not, for she was said to possess a very acid tongue and to use it cruelly at times.

The Princes Giovanelli, my husband's cousins, gave a great garden party at their country seat, but made a *faux pas* which caused a good deal of comment at the time. They had a dais erected at one end of the garden for the princely party and their nearest relations, while small tables were placed all round for the use of the other guests. Several of the guests discovered prior engagements when they heard of this arrangement, and the party thinned out considerably.

The entertainment was a musical one, but much to the surprise of the guests, when the orchestra paused after executing one of the items, liveried servants suddenly ran to and fro among the tables rapping imperatively on them with sticks and peremptorily ordering silence, as the next piece to be played was a composition by the Prince himself! Actually, it was a trivial little nothing, and the manner of calling attention to it caused great offence.

The vintage that year was a particularly fine one, and the ceremony of blessing the harvest of grapes was most striking. It commenced with the ancient traditional rites celebrated in Italy from the days when Bacchus was god of wine and laughter, and was then continued under more Christian rules. Cardinal Canossa of Verona solemnly blessed the first bunches of grapes, which were picked by the old

Marchesa di Trombetti herself ; they were then carried with song and procession into the immense kitchen of the old palace, where all preparations had been made for a feast which would have done credit to Bacchus himself. The huge folding doors dividing the kitchen from the banqueting hall had been opened, and an endless table ran the whole length of the two vast rooms. It groaned beneath masses of bread, meats and fruits ; smaller animals had been cooked and served whole ; there were mountains of rolls, lines of great steaming dishes, all sorts of wines in huge flagons, and all the scores of guests and retainers sat in order, above or below the salt, laughing, gesticulating and talking with the abandon that only true Italians can show. Music was played on and off during all the days the harvest took to collect ; everywhere was feasting and revelry and groaning cartloads of wonderful wine-dark grapes under the blue Italian sky.

On my return home after this visit, I received as my guest my old friend, Princess Minnie Leringen Westhausen. She had lost her first husband, and shortly after had married Colonel Atkinson of the Coldstream Guards, a brilliant officer much younger than herself, and one of the most admired beaux of his day. This young man had died just before her visit to me, and she was inconsolable, weeping and lamenting, and coming into my dressing-room at all hours of the day and night extolling the beautiful qualities of the late lamented and asking me what she should do without him, until I was almost dropping for want of sleep. Less than a year later she married a fabulously rich Australian squatter almost young enough to be her grandson, and, I am glad to say, found in him also all those fine and manly qualities which she so much admired and was so generously ready to praise.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

1910-II

A change of fashions. With the Queen at Sandringham. A last visit to Buckingham Palace. Death of King Edward. The Kaiser's grief. The Royal Knave of Diamonds.

ON my way to England to stay with Queen Alexandra, I stopped at Paris to renew my wardrobe, and found that fashions were just beginning to make a notable change. Old John Worth told me that slender waists—"wasp waists" as they were generally called—had had their day, and my gowns were the first he actually made in the new style which only a month or two later swept over the whole world. He was most enthusiastic about the altered effect, and I was extremely interested in the toilets, which were on hitherto absolutely unknown lines.

I found Queen Alexandra at Sandringham, surrounded only by a few intimate friends. It was the first time I had actually visited Her Majesty since her accession to the Throne, and I was prepared to find that, like all reigning persons, she had been compelled for reasons of policy or otherwise to surround herself with new friends, but actually she was utterly unspoiled, and her personal entourage was just the same as when she had been Princess of Wales. Sandringham was just as fascinating as ever—I have always thought it the most delightful Royal residence in the world—and the wealth of its magnificent hot-houses made one think of the Garden of Eden. Every flower, every ornamental shrub and tree from the whole world, so it seemed, was there; roses massed with Persian magnificence, magnolia making the air heavy with perfume, great languorous

poppies spread in lavish beauty, orange-blossom like drifted snow, innumerable tropic water-lilies—it was hard not to envy the possession of such a wealth of loveliness as was there.

The Queen had particularly asked me to translate from Danish into English her favourite childhood hymn—the only work of its kind written by Ohlenschlager, Denmark's most famous poet, who is known as the Shakespeare of the North. I made my translation in such a metre that it could be set to the original music.

“ Teach me a mood content to fade
When Autumn's yellow grass and blade
Are better Springs forecasting ;
When green my tree eternal stands
And deep its mighty roots expands
In Summer everlasting.”

That is the first verse of the translation ; the others follow through a simile in which, from a chrysalis on earth a gorgeous butterfly emerges and wings its way upwards, ever upwards towards the distant shining Star of Bethlehem. Her Majesty was most delighted with the translation, and subsequently the hymn was frequently rendered at her request in the Royal Chapels.

I had previously translated the same hymn into Italian, which language the Queen knew well, though she seldom spoke it, and this translation inspired a young Italian composer of my acquaintance to write a fantasia in music on the lines of the poem. This fantasia was dedicated to Queen Alexandra, who graciously accepted it, and became very fond of it, having it executed repeatedly at her musical evenings at Sandringham. She was herself a most expert musician, and her touch of the piano was as perfect as that of many of the world's great masters. As an acknowledgement of the dedication of the fantasia, she sent a beautiful gift to the young composer, and indicated that she would follow his work with her gracious interest, but unhappily he died young, at the beginning of a most promising career.

Queen Alexandra, like so many of her family, was a little hard of hearing, though not to anything approaching the degree which ill-informed persons who never knew her have since stated. She heard perfectly and without any fatigue when one spoke slowly and distinctly, and she exceedingly disliked to have anybody unduly raise the voice, which was done at times by the uninitiated. Lady Charlotte Knollys, the Queen's closest personal attendant, was ever ready to prevent Her Majesty the annoyance of being spoken to in a loud voice, but sometimes—very rarely—she herself slipped into the same mistake until a warning smile from the Queen caused a sudden look of almost inconsolable and lovable contrition to pass over her face.

The last days of my stay we spent at Buckingham Palace, which I dislike as much as I admire Sandringham. Its only artistic features are the throne room and the wonderful art gallery, where some of the finest examples of the paintings of the Dutch masters are kept. The State entertainments were due which were to precede the absence of the Queen on her Mediterranean trip, and the question of Parisian fashions superseded all else. Queen Alexandra was most interested in the new style of toilet which I had brought with me. I had to send it to a fashion shop near the Palace in order to have some slight alterations made in the fitting, as lack of time had prevented me giving the usual three fittings in Paris, and a curious incident resulted. The shop in question copied the model, and the following year one dress which appeared at a Royal drawing-room was a facsimile of mine, and another almost exactly like it, greatly to Her Majesty's annoyance.

Queen Alexandra so liked my new toilet that she begged me to have a special photograph of myself taken in it for her, which of course was done. A painting was also made, though this was finished later. I wore that dress at the last great banquet at Buckingham Palace just before the Queen started on her cruise. At that time, King Edward was terribly worried about the political situation of the country, and the strain combined with his restless desire to be constantly in touch with affairs was already considered to be

too much for his health. How he suffered for his unselfish desire to help his country, time was very soon to show in a most dreadful manner.

When I returned to Maccagno, I had for a day or two some very pleasant English guests, who were due almost at once to return home. I received a letter from them, expressed from Le Havre, in which they told me that, to their great surprise, they noticed the sedate *Victoria and Albert*, flying the Royal Standard as a sign of the Queen's presence on board, speeding like a black ghost up-Channel at a pace which sent a jumping column of spray from her bows ; and I knew then what the next news would be. After a few hours of heavy suspense, a wire came saying that King Edward of England was dead, and that the Queen had reached his bedside only just in time to whisper her last good-byes.

After so recent a visit, the news of the King's death made a deep and sad impression on me, coming as it did so soon after the death of my dear cousin Marie of Denmark. I began to feel that the friends I had known so intimately were passing away from me ; I was lonely and unhappy. To distract my mind, my husband thought it wise to expedite our proposed move to Grandfather's villa ; the resident nobleman was persuaded at last to leave it, offering in lieu of his debts the most delightful and disarming excuses, and our own preparations now went speedily forward. That summer was a very quiet one for me, and my chief interest was in the carrying forward of my schemes for the restoration of the Chapel which was to form King Eric's monument.

In the autumn Lady Charlotte Knollys wrote to me saying that Queen Alexandra had left Buckingham Palace and had retired to Sandringham, where she was observing the usual routine followed when His Majesty was absent. She was well, calm and resigned, and had promised to write to me again soon by her own hand. Meanwhile, my childhood playmate, King George V as he now was, sat on the throne of the world's greatest Empire, in place of his brother who had formerly been one of my dearest friends. Never since the

day of his ascension to the throne has England had cause to regret her leadership by the great monarch who still guides her destiny, and will continue to do so, I trust, for many a year yet.

When the year's mourning was over, we went to Verona and then on to Venice, where I once more met the Kaiser at the house of my cousin, Anna Morosina. He spoke most feelingly to me about the loss of his uncle, whom he had always most sincerely admired and loved. “Europe,” he said, “had lost her greatest statesman and peacemaker, and Germany one of her truest friends.” As always, His Imperial Majesty was a perfect *cavalier des dames*, and immensely popular; his perfect bow and knightly courtesy gave dignity to any gathering. We had several long and intimate talks; that was the last time I saw him before the outbreak of the Great War, and a less warlike and more kindly ruler I have never met.

Just after the New Year, we went to Florence, where my little cousin Ella Porter unexpectedly joined us, giving a new element of youth and gaiety to our party. As we commenced then to give numbers of entertainments and parties, the hotel was delighted to open the massive doors which separated our apartments from that *grande salon* in which Pauline Buonaparte had held her world-famous receptions. It was a magnificent room with wonderful tapestries and paintings, and the great chandeliers are notable as the finest examples of Venetian glass-blowing in existence. When the great room was lighted and flower-strewn, it formed one of the most exquisite places I have ever danced in, and my opinion was universally shared by our guests.

We received such constant invitations that we were obliged at times to divide our party in order that members from it could appear simultaneously at different entertainments. I received the singular honour of being elected member of the Committee of the Lyceum Club, and this caused me to be implicated in a rather singular incident. Before we left for Rome, we had decided to give a dance with a bigger invitation list even than usual, in return for all the

lavish hospitality offered us during our stay in the City of Flowers, and only after the cards had been sent out did we discover that the date clashed with that of a great entertainment at the Lyric Club, who were giving their last ball of the season on the same evening. In consequence, we decided that our own dance should end at midnight, and that we would then take on all those who were invited to the Lyric ball to finish the night there.

That afternoon, I was particularly invited to the Lyceum, where an American lady held a most interesting lecture on Famous Troubadours, dealing particularly with the legends concerning Prince Guillaume de Montluc, a direct ancestor of my own. She read to us a fine translation of a traditional ode, telling of the exploits of the Prince against the Moorish invaders. After a great battle with the forces of seven Moorish kings, he fled from the field and sought shelter in his Castle of Montluc, but his lady would not believe that the battered and wounded figure outside the drawbridge was her husband, saying that he would never fly, no matter what the odds against him. This roused a fresh fury in his breast, he turned on the pursuing foe, his broken followers were inspired by his deathless courage, and the Moors were routed, three of their kings being slain by his own hand and two others captured and held to ransom. These prisoners bought their liberty with seven wonderful and perfectly matched diamonds, and those diamonds have ever since adorned the ladies of the House of Montluc.

As the occasion seemed appropriate, I wore the necklace into which they had been fashioned for the ball that evening at the Lyric, and next day the Florence newspapers widely reported the fact. These notices attracted the attention of a certain Russian Prince, who, as we discovered afterwards, toured Europe at the head of a secret gang of international jewel thieves, and he decided that it would be desirable to possess such a tangible remnant of history. He was a man who at that time was suspected by the police of various countries, but so cleverly did he work that nothing more incriminating could ever be decided against him than that

he was always in the vicinity when famous society jewellery disappeared. Nothing, of course, could be whispered against his reputation in public as yet, and so he moved in the highest circles with absolute trust and safety.

After our evening of dancing had concluded by a visit to the Lyric, I was invited to one other great reception before I left the city, and one of the most pleasant people I met there was a young Russian Prince of unquestionable good looks and remarkable charm and distinction. He mentioned various of my friends all over Europe whom he seemed to know well, and said he had heard so much of me at their *salons* that he had always sought the opportunity to be introduced to me. He paid me many delicate compliments, his conversation was brilliant and witty, and when he begged me to permit him to pay his homage next day in a call, I was pleased to grant his request.

He called next morning, and proved so charming to us all that he was asked to dine. In due time, he sent me a wonderful bouquet of white roses and Malmaison carnations, having somehow discovered my favourite flowers, while his cleverness and charm captivated all my ladies completely. Just before we were due to leave for Rome, a gentleman called and asked an audience. I did not recognise his name, and he was told that I could not receive anyone so early, but he said that he bore most important information, and finally one of my ladies received him in our private *salon*. He was a detective (his name was one which afterwards became very famous in Italian police records), and he wished to warn me against the Russian Prince, who, he said, was suspected of having stolen historic jewels all over Europe.

When I received this message, I went in to him myself and asked him why he did not arrest the man if he was really a known robber. He explained that no direct evidence could yet be brought, because of the Prince's skill in his “ profession,” and though I had to admit that I could not understand such a situation, I thanked him for his warning

and said I would be careful of my own belongings. The Prince called later in the same day, but I said I had a headache and could not receive, and next morning we left for Rome. We had not, however, seen the last of the Princely Knave of Diamonds.

CHAPTER XXXIX

1912-13

Foxtrots in the Borgia Palace. Visits to Queen Margherita. The Knave of Diamonds meets with a reverse. A home-coming. A Princess of France.

OUR first invitation in Rome was to a great ball at the Palace of the Borgias. It was in that historic setting that I saw for the first time the modern abomination known as the foxtrot, and it occurred to me that trotting foxes would certainly be much more graceful than the jumping and running contortionists who practise it. With my *ancien régime* notions, I found these strange movements atrocious and often bordering on indecency, but of course it would be impossible for anyone who had known the beauty and art of the minuet and gavotte ever to understand their modern successors, and I must admit to having made no effort to do so.

I was sitting out, enjoying a moment of conversation with the Marchesa Salazur, and the talk turned to the new dancing modes. Noticing a young couple jerking about in the fashionable gauche and ridiculous manner just in front of us, I commenced to say to her—"Just look at those two caricatures!", but when I had only just begun my sentence, a friend suddenly joined us, and complimented the Marchesa on the very couple in question, who turned out to be her own daughter and a young officer chosen to be her fiancé. I was most thankful that the interruption came in time!

The grand event of the season was a ball given shortly after this by the Princess Radzovitch, a Russian millionairess who had brought with her to the Eternal City all the lavish magnificence of St. Petersburg. At an entertainment

on such a magnificent scale, the dresses were all exceedingly rich, and I wore for the first time the wonderful dress given me by the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, all a-glitter with diamond cuttings and gold and silver, and set off by cascades of historic Venetian rose-point lace from the time of the Republic. A large white ostrich feather was fastened on the left shoulder with an aigrette sprinkled with diamonds and following the *décolleté* to the centre of the bust ; a long train of black velvet fell from between the shoulders, held in place by a splendid diamond clasp which exalted the whiteness of the satin of the robe and the blaze of the embroidery. The costume was generally pronounced unsurpassable. I joined the polonaise and minuet, carrying my train over my arm, but I was obliged to leave before the end of the ball, and my party remained to dance on to the end in the chaperonage of Mrs. Close, a personal friend, who was a cousin of the grand old Irish Field-Marshal, Lord Roberts ; she had joined my suite a little while before.

I dined several times with my darling Queen Margherita ; she was just as sweet and unassuming as ever, and just as clever and spirited as when I had first known her, though now she was no longer young. She came second in my estimation only to Queen Alexandra ; except that she was perhaps not quite so beautiful, there was a very great similarity between them. I also went several times to lunch with the Queen at the little intimate gatherings which all those who knew her so much enjoyed. Afterwards, the afternoon was spent quietly talking or enjoying a little music.

At one such luncheon, I met again the Cardinal Merry del Val. I had not seen him for some time, and it was a pleasure to talk to him again, for he was always a brilliant conversationalist. On an occasion when I did not happen to be present, he made a remark about me to the Marchesa Villamarina, who was to Queen Margherita just what Lady Charlotte Knollys was to Queen Alexandra—a personal attendant, guardian and dear friend. I will repeat the remark as it was repeated to me by the Marchesa, and as I noted it in my diary at the time. “ It is a wonderful thing

how even time seems to respect the lovely things of God's creation ; the Princess Famy looks just as young, as striking and as graceful as when I first met her years ago ! ” That compliment is one of my memories, and I make no apology for inserting it in this Book of Memories.

When we left Rome, my husband's cousin, the Marchesa Claverini, was due to return to Verona, so we decided to travel together. We took two reserved compartments for our entourage, and after all the leave-takings had been said and we were comfortably settled into our seats, I noticed the suspected Russian Prince passing along the corridor. He stopped as if greatly surprised, made a deep bow, and entered to pay his compliments. He was, as ever, dignified and delightful, and we passed a very pleasant half-hour till the courier came and announced that luncheon had been served for us in the restaurant car.

Our servants were summoned to occupy our compartments while we and our suites were absent, and they were particularly warned to watch the dressing-cases and jewel-cases, the Prince having previously left us. The Marchesa, who was rather sceptical of my suspicions of such a delightful and aristocratic young man, was not so cautious, and was indeed rather inclined to smile at my precautions. We saw the Prince and two well-dressed and distinguished-looking men enter the restaurant car about twenty minutes after we had sat down, and I began to wonder myself whether the detective had not been mistaken, and the Marchesa in the right in laughing at my anxiety.

The Prince called again later, and we took tea together on the small collapsible tables in our compartment. He made the tedious journey pass most agreeably for us, keeping us amused with anecdotes from all the European Courts, his conversation showing beyond doubt that he was perfectly at home in the best society of all the capitals. He was then, he said, going to Bologna, where he had been invited by a family well known to us and closely related to the man whom all Italy then knew would be the next Pope, and who a little later became world-famous as His Holiness Benedict XV. The Prince had been at Bologna with his

Madame
Marchesa
de Tombellion
Ville de Verre
Secondo
Stile
Lega d'appoggio

Cover of a letter addressed in Queen Alexandra's own hand to the author, sending her by Royal Messenger
a late photograph of the Queen.

mother when he was quite a child, and remembered well the beautiful Lady Otway who lived there at that time, and who had been a friend of Grandmother's and intimate with the Royal House of France. The Prince told us how she used to play the harp, always wearing a pale blue silk gown trimmed with a multitude of tiny silver bells which tinkled deliciously at her every movement. He left the train at Bologna, and we felt quite sorry to lose him.

When I reached Maccagno again, preparations were almost completed for our forthcoming move to Grandfather's villa, and the whole place was full of packing-cases and rolls of carpets. A letter followed me speedily there from the Marchesa Claverini. She wrote that her dressing-case had been completely emptied of its contents during the train journey, though luckily enough it only contained a rather limited silver toilet set and a few unimportant trinkets, for she had temporarily borrowed jewellery while in Rome from a cousin with whom she was staying. It is probable that the thieves had mistaken her jewel-case for mine, in which the historic Montluc diamonds reposed ; or perhaps, because that was too surely guarded, they had taken what they could get elsewhere.

I was very glad to move to the villa at long last. We had gathered together all our elaborate and artistic furniture from our various places of residence, and I was able to take very great enjoyment from making the old family villa into the sort of home which I had always desired, till it became by far the most comfortable and satisfactory dwelling-place which had ever been at our disposal. The garden in particular was a joy to us. It was one of the most beautiful gardens in Italy, and a show-place which tourists staying at the Lake were permitted to visit at certain hours on two days of the week, when they were conducted round by our gardeners. Six immense camphor trees were a feature of the place (there are only two tiny ones even at Isola Bella), and our camellias were said to be the finest in the world. We had over seventy different species, and over two hundred varieties of roses in great beds which used to be carpeted as much as an inch deep in fallen petals at times.

I had hoped to do a good deal of entertaining, but this was at first prevented on account of the death of the last of my relations on my father's side. This was my grand-aunt, the Princess Marie Antoinette d'Orleans de la Graviere, who died in New Orleans at eighty-nine years of age. She was the youngest sister of my grandmother, and the last of seven sisters.

Princess Jeanne d'Orleans de la Graviere, her sister, had died at Liège some time before, and left me her belongings in real estate and investments. Princess Marie Antoinette had very little to leave ; nearly all her capital had been lost at the time of the American Civil War, and her land on the Mississippi had been ruined by constant floods. One of Grandmother's sisters married a Lascelles of Virginia, related to the Lascelles family of England into which Princess Mary married ; a street in Chicago is still named Lascelles Street after the American branch.

Princess Jeanne, who died at Liège, was always greatly admired by King Leopold of Belgium, a notable connoisseur of female beauty, and he invariably addressed her as “ My Royal Cousin.” He always hastened from one side of the street to the other when he saw her carriage stopping in order that he might open the door for her himself, and when he once declared that she was more wondrously good-looking at eighty than she had been at twenty, she placidly answered, “ Great beauty is always the heritage of our family.” She was really most notable for retaining her beauty, and at the Belgian Court it was said of her that she was even more wonderful in this respect than the famous Ninon de l'Enclos, whose own grandson fell in love with her at a masked ball at the Tuileries when she was seventy-two years old !

CHAPTER XL

1913-14

The Knave of Diamonds is caught. The clouds gather. A musical sensation. A feudal funeral. The end of my vow.

DURING the autumn that followed our move into the family villa, great numbers of new visitors were presented to me. To see the gardens and the famous camelias made an excuse for an introduction ; and sometimes the terrace as well as the great hall and the outer drawing-room was crowded with guests. The biggest hotel in Maccagno could not have accommodated so many people as I often had to visit me in the course of a day.

The Government had finally given permission to open a casino at Stresa, where high play was indulged in, and considerable scandal resulted. One day, our groom of the chambers had been down to the town, and when he returned he came to my husband's rooms and said that he wanted to speak to him about an important matter. As he was coming back from his ride, he had been accosted by two gentlemen, who had asked him whom that beautiful villa on the hill belonged to. When he told them, one of the men said, "I met the Princess at Rome ; what a wonderful person she is." When the groom had replied that he was attached to our staff, the men had complimented him on his good fortune, and had said that they had heard that the Princess's toilets and jewellery were famous, asking whether the wonderful jewels of which they had been told were ever worn in the seclusion of the country, or if they were reserved for use only in society. All these questions they managed to put in such an unsuspicious manner that the groom said he would have thought them just a couple of idle gossipers had not he heard

something of what had happened to the Marchesa Claverini recently ; but remembering that incident, he professed to know nothing of what they sought, and thought it his duty, albeit rather apologetically, to report the affair to his master.

My husband summoned the Marshal of the Carabinieri, to whom the groom gave a minute description of the two men who had accosted him, and later in the day they were arrested in Stresa. They could give no satisfactory account of themselves or of their reasons for questioning our groom ; they did not possess the established amounts considered necessary by Italian law for supporting themselves ; thefts of smaller importance had been previously reported at the casino and at the hotel where the two were staying ; and further enquiries caused one of the men to be identified as the Russian Prince who had been presented to me at Florence. No definite charge save that of vagrancy could even now be brought against him and his companion, but there was sufficient suspicion to cause him to be expelled from Italy with a warning never to return.

A little later I spent a couple of weeks with Queen Margherita, and met a great many old friends. The Princess of Schwartzburg-Rudolphstadt was there, just as interesting and high-spirited as ever, and the Princess Isabella of Genoa, Her Majesty's sister, who was a notable musician and a most charming woman in every way. We passed our time reviving old memories of the little German Courts, our expeditions into the mountains and our reminiscences of old friends of those days and their more recent doings.

We went to Rome for the beginning of the following season, and then on to Florence, where the weather was particularly cold and unpleasant, as it can be there at times. Before we had been long there, we had a wire from my husband's home saying that his mother, the old Marchesa, was dangerously ill, and he had to leave at once to see her, for she was nearly eighty-four years old. The day after he left we were surprised by a very heavy snowstorm, and the City of Flowers assumed the appearance of one of the Danish towns where I had spent my childhood. A day or so later we were relieved to get a wire saying that the Marchesa was out of danger.

At this time I saw a great deal of Prince von Bülow, the famous ex-Chancellor of Germany, who lived chiefly in Italy in the pre-War years, being indeed somewhat of an exile from his own country and Court, because of his unyielding will clashing too frequently with that of his Imperial master. He and his gifted Italian wife were very great friends of ours, and had long been so. Knowing how intimately they were in touch with affairs in Germany, we were very disturbed at this time to find that they seemed to expect an approaching outbreak of international trouble. I remember a grey afternoon during this season in Florence when the Princess took me by the arm, drew me aside, and said with tears in her eyes and with a breaking voice, “ I hope nothing will ever happen to prevent us being friends, but I am afraid—I am growing daily more and more afraid ! ”

Later, at entertainments at his wonderful villa in Rome, we were constantly present ; the Princess was yet another magnificent pianist, having been taught by Liszt, and that gift alone always delighted me very much. All the cream of Italian and visiting society was present at the von Bülow receptions, the exquisite rooms were filled with flowers, witty men and lovely women met one on every side—yet there more than anywhere else one could feel a dreadful oppression, a threat and a warning of some unnatural future event which nobody cared to name but which everyone feared, so that it was as if clever people were desperately making conversation to distract the mind in the cabins of a doomed ship. Italy was bound by the Triple Alliance to Germany and Austria, and Prince von Bülow, who saw in the German army the direct weapon of Heaven, was in Italy at a time when the Italian people held very different views. Beyond that, one steadily refused to think ; there was the music of the dance and the flutter of the lovely gowns—away to join them !

I spent a great deal of time with Queen Margherita during the early days of that last summer before the War. She kept to her usual circle of friends and did not intimately join the present Court, in which elements had insinuated themselves

which were not entirely in harmony with her ideas. I had always avoided the actual Court, for I did not feel attracted by a certain atmosphere created by a few of its personalities which was at times more democratic and at others more overbearing than anything I had noticed in the Court of King Humbert. People of no family, no spirit and no education were at times flattered and received there, with whom I and many others of the older nobility did not care to mix. After a short stay at Rome, mostly with the old Queen, I returned with my party to Florence.

At a great ball there I wore again the “Maharajah's front,” and it once more excited very widespread admiration. Despite the gathering forebodings, nothing was permitted to shadow the spontaneous gaiety of Florence society; the joyousness and music and laughter seemed redoubled as a challenge to events; never have I known a more brilliant and joyous season. An Italian Field-Marshal was present who was an intimate friend of my husband and who later won great fame in the War, and he made me promise to stay in Florence for the last grand ball of the Military Club. We did not know then—or wish to know—that it would be the last occasion of its kind held there for many years to come, and in a sense the last ever held, for since the War such affairs have lost nearly all their splendour and joy.

When we went to the ball the Field-Marshal and his staff, in brilliant full dress uniforms, awaited my party at the foot of the grand staircase, to escort us personally to the *salon*, and as we entered the drums of the chosen military band crashed into the heart-stirring prelude of the Royal March. A great sensation was caused, people stopped and looked at us, and it was believed for a moment that this unprecedented honour was being offered on my account, which of course it was not, since it was played to welcome the Field-Marshal according to Italian military etiquette.

I wore for the first time a special newly-fashioned toilet from the most famous of all the Parisian designers. It was made of white satin, with the whole front marvellously embroidered with flowers, all executed in perfect natural colours. As I sat down during one of the dances, I heard an

unpleasant crack, which was followed by others during the next few minutes. The disturbing sounds did not cease, and I suddenly discovered that the whole lining of my ball-dress was giving away. I went speedily to the dressing-room, and there I found that I must discard the complete lining, which had evidently been made of bad-quality silk, and which I discovered to my horror now hung in tatters and rags about me. Fortunately, in those days underwear had not yet been dispensed with, and I was wearing a handsome frilled silk petticoat, so the lining was not vital to the effect, and I was able to continue dancing again. I have never seen old Francesca, my wardrobe mistress, so infuriated as when she wrote to the Parisian house on the subject ; she looked like a Middle Ages Borgia at least.

We had just returned to the Lake again when we had another wire saying that my husband's mother was dying. We hurried to her side, and were only just in time to receive her last messages. For the first time, I was looked upon as the consort of the head of the ancient princely house of Trombetti, and it was in every way a trying occasion. In that great feudal household, my countenance was expected for everything that went forward, and all sorts of lugubrious ceremonies succeeded one another with fatiguing splendour. Enormous quantities of bread and salt were distributed, according to traditional practice, and hundreds—perhaps thousands—of yard-long pine torches and enormous wax candles were distributed by the regiment of servants at the great entrance to the castle. Gallons and gallons of special oil were presented to all the churches of the city and all those dependent on the family estate, so that lamps might be lighted by which masses could be celebrated to brighten the road for the departed soul ; congregations, monasteries, nunneries and almshouses for miles around had to be gratified and priests paid for altar candles by whose light long prayers could be said continuously throughout the three days before the burial.

I had to sit in state all one endless day in a dark room surrounded by the nearest relatives of the family, while I received the condolences of the very numerous relations

more distantly connected, and the friends and acquaintances of the deceased, many of whom had come long distances to show their respect. Finally, we had to follow in a cortege, strengthened by hundreds of torch-bearers from the estates, to the family church, where the body was interred, after an interminable and beautiful service, in the family vault. After all the obsequies were finally concluded, I had to go to bed and rest for a week to recover before I could face once more the journey to the Lake.

That summer, I concluded the work at this place where I am now writing, though even then I had no idea that I should ever be a fugitive myself in that resting-place which I had built for the use of other pilgrims. I travelled to and fro between our villa and the monument, superintended each new step of the work, and corresponded at length with authorities in England and Denmark to confirm various points of the tradition about King Eric Ejegod and to ensure that the building I was erecting was appropriate and fitting in every way. A saga preserved in the Royal library at Copenhagen was copied for my benefit, telling in contemporary language of the King's journey to Rome ; Sir Charles Oman of Oxford put his wonderful historic knowledge and study at my disposal, by which means I was able to check that St. Dunstan of Canterbury had met King Eric at this very spot ; and genealogical records showed how the present Royal line of England, and in particular my dear dead friend the Duke of Clarence, was directly descended from that Warrior King of the High North. So at long last was erected that sacred monument, fulfilling the vow I had made so many years ago in Fredensborg gardens in company with the man who would have been King of England.

I often used to think, as I wandered by the little monumental building beside the blue waters of Lake Maggiore, how few of his contemporaries had understood the sensitive soul of the eldest son of King Edward VII. I, who was so very intimate with the great lady who was his mother—the most wonderful and beautiful woman and the finest Queen it has ever in my long life been my privilege to know—saw

more than most, perhaps, of the burning spirit, the profound mental scope and the quick, almost womanly sympathy which was hidden by that beautiful, calm and rather haughty face. How many remember him now, I wonder ? His power over words was wonderful—he invariably, in either letters or conversation, used the perfect and inevitable phrase, his powers of persuasion were irresistible and his wit scintillating, but he was over-sensitive. The slightest lack of appreciation on the part of his listener froze him at once ; a calm, courteous silence that was so often misunderstood invariably resulted. I began the monument to keep my vow to erect a memento to the memory of King Eric of the Northland, but I liked to feel, ere it was finished in its white beauty, that it was partly also a loving memorial to the tragic Prince of England, who, though the world has forgotten him, will live deathlessly on in the remembrance of one at least who was once and for so long his very dear friend. I am old and tired now, but the Prince Charming who died in the glory of his youth will never grow old—he is for ever young, handsome and smiling as I saw him that night when we rowed out together on the faery silver waters of Fredensborg Lake.

CHAPTER XLI

1914-15

Thunder in the air. Prince von Bülow sums up the situation.
Italy decides. *Viva Italia!* A present for Queen Alexandra.
Off to the Front.

TOWARDS the end of 1913 and in the spring of 1914, the Court circles of all Europe were desperately aware that there was thunder in the air. In close touch as I was with the German and Austrian Courts, I often at that time received letters hinting at dread possibilities; the storm that had been gathering for perhaps ten years was about to break over the world. Germany was led by politicians blind with the desire for political aggrandisement, and the Kaiser stood more and more alone among those who for ever whispered in his ear of a "war of self-assertion" and of "the enemy insults to our nation." And, indeed, Europe had for long treated him rudely enough—this man who so loved to play at soldiers, who had built the mightiest army the world has ever known, and who alone in Europe might have had strength to declare for peace had those who then mistrusted him understood something of his introspective, almost morbid nature.

When on Monday, June 29th, the news went flashing all over a startled Europe of the brutal murder at Serajevo, we knew well what would follow. The Austrian General Staff had for long been passionately urging the danger that lay for them in the encirclement of Austria and Germany by nations not of their political outlook. This murder gave them the excuse they sought for penetrating the surrounding ring by a practical seizure of Servia. It was hoped in Vienna that the Tsar, who was known always to fear assassination, would be

so revolted by the crime at Serajevo that he would hesitate while Austria carried out her plans ; but even if Russia opposed the Servian annexation, Austria knew that Germany could be persuaded to display what it was hoped would prove an overwhelming moral force against her, as had happened once before in 1909 in similar circumstances.

The soldiers began to mobilise the armies and the politicians stood craftily behind them in safety, egging them on. The Kaiser sent a telegram to the Tsar, saying that he was using all his personal influence to induce Austria to come to a peaceful agreement with Russia, and the Tsar replied with a pathetic appeal to his cousin's “ wisdom and friendship,” signing the telegram “ Ton Nicky qui t'aime ” (thy Nicky whom thou lovest). The Tsar ordered mobilisation to be suspended, but his Minister for War flatly disobeyed the Royal command and mobilisation went forward in the teeth of it. Kings do not make our wars ; often they are impotent prisoners in their palaces while the drums beat martial measures in the streets outside.

Count Porza-Voglea, First Adjutant to the King of Italy, was staying with us at this time, when he received a telegram ordering his immediate return to Rome. He told us of a conversation he had had a week or two earlier with the Prince von Bülow, in which the Prince had made a terrible prophecy. “ The Kaiser has been compelled to take his present action by the Austrian War Party,” von Bülow had said ; “ war will come now—war between Germany and Austria on the one hand and Russia, France and perhaps England on the other. But it will be the quickest war in modern records—it will all be over within three weeks. What can the French soldiers with their paper shoes, or the untrained English parade troops do against the quickly-mobilised and ruthlessly efficient army of Germany ? ”

The Count seemed impressed by the assurance of the great German statesman, but not so my husband. I remember so well his instant reply. “ You may tell the Prince when next you call at his villa in Rome that I have lived long enough in England to know that, if that mighty nation enters the struggle, Germany is doomed. Three weeks might dispose

of France ; but the souls of their ancient heroes inspire those sneered-at English parade troops ; and the country that overthrew Philip of Spain and Napoleon of France is neither slow to prepare nor weak to move when once her deathless freedom is threatened.” The Count seemed to think us prejudiced at the time, but events have proved our words, as they very nearly proved von Bülow's also.

The inevitable came—war, engulfing in its smoke and flame all the nations about us. And Italy herself was bound by the terms of the Triple Alliance to support Austria and Germany. For us, who had so many dear friends in Berlin and Vienna as well as in London, Paris and St. Petersburg, the War even in those early days brought only sorrow and no glory or patriotic thrill. It was all so wasteful. But for Italy it brought another feeling. You cannot stifle the voice of a nation, and everywhere the names of England and Italy were linked, and Union Jacks were covertly displayed.

A few days after the actual declaration of war between Germany and Russia, I received some disquieting news of a personal nature. My Belgian solicitor, in whose trust was the entire and considerable fortune left me by my aunt, the Princess Jeanne d'Orleans de Chartres, had disappeared into Germany. He had realised every penny that was available, having been quietly working to this end for several weeks ; and had then fled from Liége leaving nothing but the estates themselves and a number of debts relative to them. A day or two later, the German armies commenced the siege of Liége, and those estates were then so terribly scarred with shells that the Belgian Government subsequently forbade their cultivation for twenty-five years, for fear of the explosion of projectiles left in the ground. In the end, the estates had to be handed over entire to the Belgian Government, to save us having to pay vast taxes on useless ground. As for the solicitor, he was never traced.

At this time, public feeling rose so high that printed orders were displayed all over Italy threatening heavy fines and imprisonment to anyone who expressed in a public place any anti-German opinion. Moreover, the country teemed with informers who were employed to detect breaches of

Oct. 16th 1904

SANDRINGHAM.



Dear Machea
The Author has
arrived quite safely and Queen
Alexandra desires me to thank
you so much for it and to
say how highly she highly
values and prizes the
work done by her beloved

Under Appelle
Fædrelandet
Kongehuset
Mabel Mabel
Hans Christian Andersen
for Chappell
Appelle

Letter from Queen Alexandra's secretary acknowledging a present from the Author (see Chapter XL), and (right) the end of a letter to the Author in the Queen's own hand, in Danish, in which language she always wrote to intimate friends.



this order. My husband, as the officer of highest rank in the neighbourhood of our villa, was officially instructed to see that the order was obeyed, which proved a most embarrassing matter for us. Our sympathies were known, and people used to stop him in the road when no one else was about, and say—“Colonel—when are we going to the Front on the side of the English ?” Also, whenever my carriage appeared, crowds used to gather round it, cheering and shouting—“ Lead us against the Germans, Princess of France !”

Despite all this, however, society life in Rome continued with undiminished gaiety and carelessness of the morrow. There was no attempt to economise ; luxuries were heedlessly displayed on all sides ; dances and balls and receptions continued and toilets were as costly and splendid as ever. In that butterfly existence, war might never have been dreamed of, yet the Red Gods were already whetting their swords at our very gates. Had a little more intelligence been exercised and a little more restraint been shown then, Italy need never have suffered the terrible hardships and privations which later came upon her as a result of this extravagance.

During that winter, altered circumstances and the threat of future troubles forced me to dismiss my suite, though then I did not feel its lack so much as I have since done.

It was a time of terrible foreboding through which the news from the battle-fronts pierced like red flashes of shell-fire through a rolling fog. We knew well that the War could not end, as the optimists had stated, by Christmas ; we did not know how long it might continue or what its end might be.

And then came that fateful May morning when the news came through to us that Italy had declared war on Germany—that the voice of the people had conquered. My husband, riding down to visit the town, found a dense mob at our gates, cheering, waving Union Jacks and national flags, and swaying to and fro in uncontrollable excitement. The town band was there in force, and as he emerged it struck up the first notes of “ God Save the King !”—a version

whose spirit was admirable but whose execution was a little unusual. With flags waving and cheers drowning the blare of the brass instruments, he was accompanied down to the steamer, and then the crowd returned and thronged outside our gates all day. That night, I was serenaded by a great crowd.

All the steamers and trains were dangerously over-crowded, and friends who were with us had great difficulty in getting away. There was not a horse or a carriage to be had for miles round, and our own six horses had already been put at the disposal of my husband's regiment, to which, of course, he was now recalled. My own dear old saddle-horse had died a little while before, and the new one had not yet found its way fully into our hearts, so my parting from my pet was not as sorrowful as it might have been, though it was bad enough. My little launch was sold, and then our dear old barge, the *Lady of the Lake*, for there were no men left to manage them, so thoroughly was Italy combed for man-power at the beginning of her campaigns. Our men-servants went, too, and in the town the principal factory was forced to close for lack of workers.

I had at this time a long and very sad letter from Queen Alexandra. It took fourteen days to reach me, even though it was conveyed by Royal Courier, such was the state of communications at that time. The Queen was very grieved and anxious, she said, about the War and its probable after-effects ; the terrible losses at the Fronts were felt personally by her kind and loving heart, and the crippling effect on her adopted country was anticipated by her even then as a great coming disaster. Sir Rennell Rodd, then English Ambassador at Rome, was most kind to me in those days in the matter of expediting my correspondence with various Courts and friends, and indeed I was indebted to him in this way throughout the War.

Because of our friends in the Courts of all the warring countries, much of our correspondence in those dreadful years was of a nature which could not be entrusted to the usual channels of conveyance, and some of it travelled by very strange and unlikely means. Often, its contents were of

an equally surprising nature, throwing very unexpected lights on the conduct of the War in various high places. These letters I have still, carefully preserved, as they are now of some considerable historic value ; and together with a regular and comprehensive diary kept by my husband and myself during the War years, I may perhaps consider later placing them before the public. They form a commentary on the secret Court history of Europe in 1914 to 1918 which may, when their time comes, clear up some of the illusions and propaganda-led caricatures which have since been accepted as true pictures of the events and personalities of that troubled epoch.

To return to my story. We arranged to occupy a house on my husband's family property near the border, thinking it would be conveniently near for leave visits. With the greatest difficulty, I managed to get packing cases and to send our furniture and belongings up to the villa by freight trains. I might have saved myself the trouble. Before we could even visit the place for the first time, the Austrian troops had wiped out their first reverses and came pouring over the frontier ; our lovely villa was burnt, and priceless paintings, rare books, and nearly all my irreplaceable photographs and letters from Royal friends were destroyed there by the enemy.

That was the second great blow the War dealt us. We were unable to continue in our former manner of living, and to our very great sorrow, Grandfather's historic villa had to be sold and all who were left of our old family retainers were dismissed. Of those partings, I cannot write.

While going through the house prior to our departure, we discovered, in one of the cellars, a dust-covered antique trunk evidently dating from Grandmother's time. It was full of most interesting links with those far-off days of my childhood happiness, and among them was an ancient cushion which I remembered had always followed Grandmother in all her changes of abode, and which was always set in her favourite chair before her writing-desk. When we found it, the cushion was so worn and moth-eaten that the white satin groundwork fell away to dust at our touch.

But the exquisitely embroidered flowers were as fresh and beautiful as ever, and they gave me an idea. Those flowers had been worked by Queen Louise of Denmark (Queen Alexandra's mother) when she was twelve years old, and had been sewn by her into the white satin cushion, which was presented by the little Princess to her mother, the Landgravin Wilhelmina of Hesse. This lady gave it to Grandmother, who was her intimate friend.

I cut out the flowers with infinite care from the shreds of the ancient satin, and appliqued them on a new white satin cushion-cover, in whose corner I worked the famous private monogram always used by Queen Alexandra—the two crossed A's, surrounded by the British Royal-Imperial Crown. After the War, a London friend had this mounted for me, and went personally on my behalf to Marlborough House with it. He had the extreme honour of being admitted to the presence of Her Majesty, and the cushion which had such an historic sentimental interest was accepted by her. It was acknowledged by Lady Charlotte Knollys, and afterwards the Queen herself sent me a personal note thanking me for the gift, and saying that she had been moved to tears on receiving it. That was almost the last letter Her Majesty ever wrote. I have a letter from Princess Victoria in which she says that the historic cushion yet occupies a place of honour in the favourite chair of Queen Alexandra in the Memorial Room at the Palace.

My reminiscences draw to a close ; the scent of fragrant rosemary that whispers of a waltz from Strauss, the rustle of Court gowns and the playful intrigues behind the spread fans, is blotted out by the more acrid odour of smoke rolling across our peaceful lands from the battlefields of Northern Italy. But yet I have one memory more.

It is of a lithe, upright figure in uniform, the sunlight in his face, striding across the shaven lawns to where, beneath the shade of a gigantic camphor tree, I sat at tea with several friends. He looked so young, so trim, so handsome—the very bridegroom who led me down the aisle of that Brighton church so many years before, and as he bent over my hand with that distinguished grace which was all his own, I felt

like a bride again, and my friends said that I looked like one.

He had come to say good-bye before his regiment left for the Front, but we changed that sad word to “ *au revoir*. ” Was I to stay quietly at home when my place was by his side in the shell-scarred inferno before the Austrian trenches ? Never ! Before he left, we had arranged that I should immediately follow him, in the capacity of Lady of Sacred Charity attached to the Red Cross at the Front, and that I subsequently did.

The pomp of yesterday is past ; the dainty music of our gavottes and minuets was drowned in the crash of the war-drums, and now will never return. The gay Courts I knew are changed or swept away altogether. The Kings and Emperors with whom I danced are many of them in exile ; the bodies of some of them have been thrown into dishonourable graves. The world goes striding on, careless of departed glories ; but perhaps, at times when you are reflective or when the modern jazzing music tires you, it may be you will feel inclined to sit before your fire at ease and look back, amused and wondering, at the glorious pageantry in which we lived our lives.

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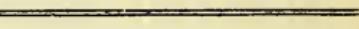
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